DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 137 145 SO 009 611

AUTHOR	Rosenfelt, Deborah Silverton, Ed.
TITLE	Learning to Speak: Student Work. Female Studies X.
INSTITUTION	State Univ. of New York, Old Westbury. Coll. at Old Westbury. Feminist Press.
PUB DATE	75
NOTE	255p.; For related documents, see SO 009 608-610
AVAILABLE FROM	The Feminist Press, Box 334, Old Westbury, New York 11568 ($5.00)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Anthologies; Athletics; College Students; *Creative Writing; Descriptive Writing; Females; Higher Education; *Humanities Instruction; Mothers; Religion; Research; *Student Developed Materials; *Womens Studies; Writing
IDENTIFIERS	China

ABSTRACT

The tenth volume in a series, this publication is a collection of papers produced by college students in women's studies classes around the country. The major purpose of the collection is to provide teachers and students in the field with access to the products of classes other than their own. Most of the writings come from the humanities or from introductory interdisciplinary courses. The anthology is divided into four sections. The first section contains biographical essays, journal excerpts, autobiographies, and poems on the theme of mothers and mothering. Section two contains five autobiographies. Research reports are included in the third section. Topics researched include the role of women in children's popular ballads, women and the Mormon Church, women in sports reporting, and rural Chinese women. The fourth and final section contains creative works--a short story, poems, a play, and a song. (Author/RM)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

Female Studies X

Learning to Speak

Student Work

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL BY MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Feminist Press
Deborah S. Silverton
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

Editor: Deborah Silverton Rosenfelt

The Feminist Press

ED137145

SO 009 611

The Feminist Press
Box 334
Old Westbury, New York 11568

The Clearinghouse on Women's Studies

Copyright © 1975 by Deborah Silverton Rosenfelt

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright
Conventions. Published in the United States by The Feminist Press,
SUNY/College at Old Westbury, Box 334, Old Westbury, N.Y. 11568

Manufactured in the United States of America.
Printed by The Faculty Press.

First Edition.

Cover design by Gilda Kuhlman

To Sara Silverton,
my mother

And the greatest joy of all was learning to speak . . .
Ellen Kirchner, "Autobiography"

"Myra," she told me, "I'll always be very proud of you, and I want you to know that if I had my life to lead over, I would learn to speak."
Myra Peterson, "My Grandmother"

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is the work of all the students and teachers who contributed so generously, and especially of some who responded with reams of material and with much encouragement and advice: Ruth Altmann, Ros Baxandall, Pat Buddemeyer, Ellen Dubois, Mary Anne Ferguson, Barbara Gates, Florence Howe, Janice Mackenzie, Elizabeth A. Meese, Carlagaye Olson, Lillian Robinson, Judith Stitzel, J. J. Wilson, and Joan Hoff Wilson.

It owes its existence to The Feminist Press, and to Sara Armstrong and Marina Preussner, who typed, proofed, edited, cut, pasted, and cared.

CONTENTS

page

INTRODUCTION vii

ON MOTHERS AND MOTHERING: A MISCELLANY 1

1. My Grandmother 2
   Myra Peterson
2. Verde: A Portrait 7
   Patti Patton
3. Excerpts from her Journal 13
   Claire Chisler Phillips
4. The Most Dangerous Stereotype 18
   Charlotte Levey
5. Untitled Poem 21
   Gail Lynch
6. (poem i will send you); (poem i will not) 22
   Karen Stern

AUTOBIOGRAPHY 25

7. Through the Looking Glass Finally: A Collective Autobiography 27
   The Women's Biography Collective, Sonoma
8. Autobiography 64
   Ifueko M. Egharevba
9. Recollections and Fragments: An Autobiography of Sorts 68
   Nancy Black
10. Autobiography 73
    Ellen Berard Kirchner
11. An Autobiography 76
    Julie Dodd Wood

RESEARCH 79

12. A Detailed, In-Depth, Incisive Analysis of the Roles of Women in Child's *Popular Ballads* 81
Leslie J. Calman

13. Women and the Mormon Church 97
M. Catherine Kennard

14. Women in Sports Reporting 117
Valerie Struble

15. Margaret Fuller: A Forgotten Feminist 130
Deborah Reich

16. Young Women in the Chinese Countryside 144
Jane E. Wheeler

CREATIVE WORK 159

17. Who's on Trial Here? 161
Lois Buescher

18. Thompson's Dead Cow; Cop-out Fantasy; Ann; Direct Energy from the Sun 174
Andrea Abbott

19. We Were Sisters, Then 177
Becky Birtha

20. To My Sister 178
Elaine Zimmerman

21. Murphy Hall 179
Jody Daniels

22. I'll Play the Kazoo (With You); Genocide 180
Elizabeth Kate Jackson

23. Signing the Divorce Paper 183
Marty Moatz-Austin

24. What It Means To Be in the Women's Movement; A Feminist Song 184
Elaine Zimmerman

25. *Medea* 187
Gloria Albee

CONTRIBUTORS 239

INTRODUCTION

In the past five years, women's studies has become an established interdiscipline on college campuses. The directory of Who's Who and Where in Women's Studies (The Feminist Press, 1974) amply documents the number, diversity, and geographic distribution of courses: 4,658 courses, 112 women's studies programs, as of 1974--not counting courses and programs in continuing education or alternative institutions. At least four new interdisciplinary journals have arisen to accommodate the rapid growth of scholarship in women's studies; even established professional journals are beginning to publish research in the field, sometimes in special issues devoted to women (though not at a pace adequate to the explosion of new research and theory).[1]

The Female Studies series has both recorded and facilitated this evolution.[2] As the emphasis in women's studies has changed from the facilitation of a new field of inquiry to the evaluation of its accomplishments, it is appropriate that this, the tenth volume in the series, should be a collection of the work produced by students in women's studies classes around the country.

---

[1] The journals include Feminist Studies; the University of Michigan Papers in Women's Studies; Signs: Women in Culture and Society, and Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal. There are also major anthologies in most disciplines--anthropology, economics, education, history, law, literature, psychology, and sociology--one indicator of the publishing industry's response to the new materials and new needs of the discipline. Women Studies Abstracts provides annotated bibliography four times a year, and Barnard College publishes annually a booklength bibliography of the year's work in women's studies.

[2] The first three volumes, responding to the clear need for basic curricular materials, contained syllabi, program descriptions, and bibliographies. Female Studies I, assembled, named, and providentially numbered by Sheila Tobias, contained 17 syllabi ; Female Studies II included 66 syllabi; a Guide to Current Female Studies published concurrently listed a total of 110 courses. The following year the editors of Female Studies III had over 600 courses to choose from and included descriptions of 54 of them, along with materials from 17 women's studies programs. Female Studies IV: Teaching about Women, contained essays on

The most immediate purpose of this collection was to provide teachers and students in the field with access to the products of classes other than their own. Women's studies since its inception has been concerned not only with curriculum but also with pedagogy; probably no other academic area in higher education has generated so many thoughtful discussions about the classroom. At conferences, workshops, institutes, over coffee and over the typewriter, feminist teachers have exchanged their ideas about and experiences in teaching their women's classes.[3] Women's studies, like the women's movement that inspired it, lives through such shared communications, and this anthology was a natural evolution from a sharing of methods to a sharing of results.

---

feminist pedagogy. Female Studies V presented papers on the praxis and theory of women's studies from a Fall, 1971, conference on Women and Education: A Feminist Perspective, at the University of Pittsburgh. These first five volumes were published by KNOW, INC., and represented a fruitful collaboration between members of the Modern Language Association Commission on the Status of Women, then chaired by Florence Howe, the editors of KNOW, and The Feminist Press, where the Clearinghouse on Women's Studies had become a central repository for materials in the field.

Female Studies VI: Closer to the Ground--Women's Classes, Criticism, Programs--1972, also a project of the Commission on the Status of Women, focused on literature and criticism and was published by The Feminist Press. The seventh volume in the series, Going Strong: New Courses/New Programs, once again presented syllabi, course descriptions, and bibliography; it was in editing that volume that the present volume was conceived. An eighth volume is due from KNOW, and The Feminist Press is publishing concurrently with this one a ninth, on Women's Studies in the Foreign Languages.

[3] For discussion of feminist pedagogy, see essays in Female Studies IV, V, and VI, and the introduction to VII; College English (May 1971, October 1972); Ms. (September 1973); Alice Rossi and Ann Calderwood, eds., Academic Women on the Move (New York: Russell Sage, 1973); and Women on Campus: The Unfinished Liberation (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Change Magazine, 1975).

Secondly, the student work here provides one source for the evaluation of women's studies. In a memorandum written in consultation to the women's studies program at the University of Massachusetts/Boston, Nancy Reeves, author of Womankind: Beyond the Stereotypes (Chicago: Aldine, 1971), states: ". . . the proof of the effectiveness of the course for the student is in what happens to that student. I have therefore come to think that what the student produces is the best evaluation index" (June, 1973). Evaluation, of course, depends on an understanding of the objective, and the specific objectives of women's studies courses vary with the subject, the instructor, the program, and the level. If these courses seek as a larger goal to change the social attitudes and social institutions that have limited women in the past, the extent of their effectiveness is difficult to assess, perhaps inseparable from the impact of the women's movement as a whole. Yet the works gathered here do suggest their success in meeting more tangible objectives generally acknowledged as common denominators: the attempt to provide new knowledge about and communicate an enlarged understanding of women's nature, history, status, and contributions, and to encourage simultaneously the student's self-discovery and self-fulfillment.

Are the papers here representative of student work in women's studies generally? Yes and no. Yes, in the variety of the contributors themselves and of their geographic and institutional affiliations. There are twenty-three individual contributors, in addition to the twenty or so who co-authored the collective autobiography. Three of the twenty-three are nonwhite. Their backgrounds vary from poverty-stricken to well-to-do. Their ages vary most of all, from the "normal" collegiate late teens to the mid-fifties; more than a third are women who have returned to school after a lengthy hiatus. They come from every area of the country; their institutions range from the community college to the large university.

No, in that they indicate only partially the breadth of women's studies itself. Women's studies embraces both undergraduate and graduate work in virtually every discipline. This collection includes mostly undergraduate work, partly because the most sophisticated graduate work will eventually find its way into the journals mentioned above, partly because the abundance of materials necessitated some such arbitrary parameter.[4]

---

[4] Some qualifications: one of the research papers was written by a graduate student for an undergraduate course and one by an undergraduate for a graduate course. Some of the creative writing came from workshops offered through UC Berkeley's exten-

Also, most of the selections came from the humanities or from introductory interdisciplinary courses rather than from the social or natural sciences. That emphasis reflects the nature of the materials I received: in all I read over 250 papers, journal excerpts, collected poems, stories, plays, bibliographies; more than half came from courses in literature, language, and writing, or from introductory courses.[5]

These were also some of the most original and exciting contributions. Many were of an autobiographical nature: actual autobiographies, portraits of female members of the student's family, the ubiquitous journals, and--an increasingly common approach in women's literature classes--meldings of autobiography, literary criticism, and social commentary. To quote a letter from Mary Anne Ferguson, author of Images of Women in Literature (Houghton Mifflin, 1973): "In encouraging autobiography and creativity, however defined, women's studies is at the forefront of where education ought to be and occasionally IS going--toward integration of cognitive and affective modes of apprehending reality." And finally, it was the willingness of students to risk self-expression and the power with which they did so that impressed most.

The theme of this volume, Leaning to Speak, has to do with that growing sense of selfhood and the power to express it.

The anthology is divided into four sections: the first is a miscellany, a variety of approaches to a common theme: mothers

---

sion program; three of the creative writers had matriculated at the time of their enrollment in writing workshops.

[5] Originally I had intended to use more research papers, representing as many different disciplines as possible. I solicited material from all the women's studies programs listed in Female Studies VII, often contacting personally teachers and students with whom I had corresponded at that time. I also used the files of repositories like the Clearinghouse on Women's Studies and Barnard's Women's Resource Center. The abundant response from the courses in language and literature probably reflects the orientation of the network already established between the Clearinghouse and the MLA Commission on the Status of Women, as well as my own professional ties. After these and the introductory courses, history was the next largest category, and there were two to ten papers each in other fields: anthropology, art, education, journalism, psychology, sociology. Of course, much of the work in women's studies, whatever its disciplinary origin, is interdisciplinary in method and content; that is one of its strengths.

and mothering. Women's studies, like the women's movement as a whole, fosters the will to reflect on the lives of our female forebears and our relationship with them, and to reexamine the role of mother defined for so long as central to the female experience.[6] The other three sections represent different genres: autobiography, research, and creative work.

Student work attests to both the validity and the vitality of women's studies. This collection is not the only response to the hunger for its contributions. Many classes have produced papers or group projects that have already been published or distributed at least locally, breaking the old pattern of individual student writing work on demand for individual teacher: from a writing class for women taught by Ruth Hepburn at the University of California, Santa Barbara, Movements: An Anthology on Women, a collection of poetry and artwork; from a history class taught by Beverly Chico at the Community College of Baltimore, a 119-page bibliography of works on women in the Peabody Library, called First Sampler; from a literature class taught by Priscilla Allen at Indiana University, Neglected American Women Writers: A Collection of Bibliographies, over 100 pages long. Other student work has of course been published in Female Studies VI, and in journals like the new University of Michigan Papers in Women's Studies. As I wrote in Female Studies VII, women's studies students, even at the undergraduate level, are writing real work for real audiences, not just academic exercises in exchange for a grade.

Of course not all work written by women's studies students is profound, original, and beautifully written. Feminist teachers are not magicians who transform average students into gifted seminal thinkers and writers with the touch of a woman-powered wand. But much of it is of unusually high quality, much of it is moving, and almost all of it--perhaps its true uniqueness--is interesting. Enough. The student work gathered here speaks eloquently for itself.

---

[6] Ms., for example, recently carried a feature of similar writings called "Daughters and Mothers--Can We Be Friends?" (III, June 1975, 49 ff.).

ON MOTHERS AND MOTHERING: A MISCELLANY

Students in many women's studies class write about mothers and mothering. Often, they examine their mothers' and grandmothers' lives as part of their own search for identity and for an understanding of their past. Their growing feminist awareness enables them to view their mothers with a comprehension, a compassion bridging the chasm between generations. Yet often they question or reject the way of life their mothers represent, the institution of motherhood as we know it.

The selections here begin to suggest the variety of forms for written work in women's studies classes. The first two are biographical essays for classes in women and literature. In the first, Myra Peterson lovingly recalls her grandmother; in the second, Patti Patton paints a graphic portrait of her mother. In work such as this, students become both writers and social historians; they contribute to literature their own images of the women who have mattered in their lives.

The third selection is a series of comments about mothers and mothering excerpted from Claire Chisler Phillips's journal, eighty pages long in its entirety. In such journals, by now a standard assignment in many women's studies classes, students try to integrate from day to day their academic and personal lives, their intellectual probings and emotional responses. An assignment for an Introduction to Women's Studies, this journal's honesty and intelligence validate the belief of many women's studies teachers that student work can successfully combine affect and analysis.

Charlotte Levey's paper on Wright Morris's stereotyped Mom, written from the perspective of mother as well as daughter, is at once autobiography, literary criticism, and social commentary--a flexible approach to literature increasingly common and fruitful in feminist classrooms and feminist criticism.

Karen Stern's and Gail Lynch's poems speak with an ambivalent tone common to many of these writings, full of anger and of love.

MYRA PETERSON

Deborah Rosenfelt
Images of Women in Literature

California State University, Long Beach
Spring 1974

MY GRANDMOTHER

My maternal grandmother, who came to stay with us for long and intermittent visits during my childhood, was a strong influence on my life. I can remember looking forward to all her visits, and would count the days, hours, and even minutes until she and my grandfather would come. In many ways she seemed more like a mother to me than my own mother, and so as a young toddler, I had named her "Maw," and my grandfather became "Paw." The thing I liked best about my grandmother was that she gave me the feeling of being loved and accepted for who I was, and that feeling was strongest when she held me gently against her and I felt the softness of her heavy, matronly body, and it seemed as though no one in the world could ever harm me again.

My grandmother grew up in the little town of Temple, Texas, the fifth of nine children. Her younger sister, who died at twelve, was the only child in the family who did not survive and reach adulthood. My grandmother's parents also adopted three children: Minnie, who was grandmother's cousin, orphaned because her mother had died in childbirth, and two boys whose parents had deserted them, and so there were actually a dozen children in the family. My grandmother's father worked in the roundhouse in Temple repairing engines. I have been told by many of his children that he was a very gentle and loving man.

My grandmother had little education, and her goal in life was to marry and have children. She kept her eye out for "a good provider," and so when my grandfather, who also worked for the railroad, came to live with her family as a boarder, she knew she had met her Prince Charming. Ephraim Gillespie Fletcher was his given name, and he came from a family of seven who lived in the nearby and even smaller town of Whitewright. He had two sisters, Sierra Alesha and Alexia Ambler, and four brothers, Sharon Lemont, Ruford Ellsworth, Finis Cameron, and Garvis Ganuine. These names were always a chief topic of conversation when our family got together and never ceased to keep us amused, almost as amused as the family tales about their experiences growing up in Whitewright with the names. And so Ephraim and my grandmother were married; he was twenty-one and she was sixteen.

My grandmother's son was born on Christmas Eve the following year, and my mother was born two years later. After several difficult miscarriages and a long bout with tuberculosis, my grandmother had a second daughter, Sue Anna, who was born eleven years after my mother. It is important to record the births of her children in any account of my grandmother's life, for she believed, like so many women then and now, "My children are my life."

My grandparents were married nearly fifty years, and in all the time that I was with them, I never heard her call him anything but "Mr. Fletcher." As a youth my grandfather had worked as a cowboy herding cattle into the boxcars of the Texas and Pacific Railroad. Because of his job with the railroad, he was away for five days, and home for two. When he arrived grumpy and tired, she acted as if the king had returned to the palace. Things may have been disorganized throughout the week, greens and cornbread may have been more than enough for the daily fare, but when Mr. Fletcher came home, order reigned, and a full-course meal of Southern fried chicken, homemade biscuits with honey, and hominy grits was in order. I never sensed, though, that there ever was any close communication between them, and when my grandmother's efforts to talk and be heard met with his stolid and stubborn silence, the dishes flew, even if the desired words of communication did not. Then my grandfather, all six feet of him, would sag and exclaim, "Now I'll be dat-durned, if she ain't the craziest woman I ever knew."

Maw visited us often when I was small, as my mother was living under the heavy burden of my father's alcoholism. Mother had gone to work full time at Douglas during the war to carry our family through. She had little understanding of my father's illness, and while she was using every source available to help her survive those years, I was expected to "be strong and grown up, because since Father is a child, you must be the adult." And so I was, but when Maw came to visit, I could let down and be a child again.

Maw and I would sometimes sit for hours listening to classical music on the radio, and when they would play a melancholy selection by Tchaikovsky, the violins were so sad and beautiful that I would cry. "Myra," Maw would say, "you're very tender-hearted." I knew she accepted my tears, and understood my feeling. Listening to Bach made me feel like I could do anything in the world that I wanted, and I first shared this with her, and we laughed as I danced to the rhythmic beat of Mr. Johann Sebastian Bach. Even when she was gone, and my father came home drunk playing his typical game of "Uproar," I would hide myself away and remember the music, the dancing, the tears and laughter, and most of all the feeling of acceptance that she gave me.

Maw always had the perfect cure for anything which ailed us. After a dizzying two-day bout with stomach flu, she told me she would brew me something which would leave me feeling better than new. She brought me her special preparation of "graveyard stew," named that, of course, because, though you felt as if the grave was your next step, the stew would stir all these thoughts from your mind and body. Actually it was warm milk put in a bowl, and topped with toasted bread crumbs which had been buttered and cut into tiny cubes, cinnamon, nutmeg, and sugar sprinkled on top. After this special brew, which she assured me was exclusively her own, I felt wonderful, just as she had said I would. This is something which I now prepare for my children, and it still has a magical effect, although its strength lies in the belief and not in the substance.

Although my grandmother had been a trim ninety-eight pounds when she married, her weight increased with the increase of her years. I only saw her as a heavy, matronly woman, and I never could imagine her young and slim. To me, it seemed that she had been the way she was forever. Once I followed her in mother's bedroom, and watched her give herself a shot of insulin in her upper leg. She had developed diabetes in her forties, probably due to a faulty diet of mostly fats, starches, and sugar. I can still remember how huge her legs looked to me, the circulation being cut off by her tight garters. Her upper leg was black and blue in the place where she had given herself the shots, and she breathed heavily under her weight. She often had to use a spray filled with medicine for her asthma in order to get her breath at all. When she would choke, unable to get her breath, its hissing sound, like the bellows breathing air into a dying fire, gave her new spirit. I also sensed that food, especially sweets, was her substitute for something else which I never could point to and name.

When I was a teenager I took the train back to Texas, and spent many long, hot summer months at her home. She was always very busy--cooking, preserving, cleaning, and quilting. She made beautiful patchwork quilts, and supplied all her children and grandchildren with these works of her hands. I don't recall ever seeing her read a book; books were to be dusted, but not read. She could play anything on the piano and loved music, although she had never taken a lesson and couldn't read a note. Had she been able to take lessons and study music, I'm sure she would have done extremely well, for she really was quite talented. My grandfather played the piano, too, as well as the mandolin and fiddle, and sometimes they would play together.

Maw rarely went to church, saying that Paw could represent our family to the Lord. Secretly I knew that she was insecure and shy around the people at church, and that the social scene there proved to be too painful, so it was just easier to stay home and relax. She was angry at Paw because he gave his tithe regularly, even when they were, as she would say, "as poor as church mice." Once when mother was about six, my grandmother told my grandfather that she knew of a poor little girl who had no winter's coat, and she wondered if he didn't wish to give his tithe to this poor child instead of to the First Baptist Church of Temple. My grandfather gave his consent, handed her the money, and that very afternoon she went out to buy my mother a new coat to see her through the wet and cold Texas winter.

T. S. Eliot claims that "between the idea and the reality, between the motion and the act, falls the shadow," and it seemed that between my grandmother's feelings and ideas, and her actual response to others, something fell, and I was never sure just what. When the phone would ring and my grandmother was busy, she would grumble because of being interrupted, but when she picked up the phone her entire countenance was suddenly transformed, and smiling, she would say, "Hello, oh, hello, Mrs. Hall, funny that you should call because I was just thinking of you." She was always thinking of whoever called, and this opening statement would be the beginning of at least an hour's conversation which she did not even desire. All visitors as well as phone callers were warmly welcomed into her home, even though minutes before she had been angered that they were coming. Since she never seemed at ease with company, I figured that her overacceptance of others, the warmly-dripping honey which she spread, was really the misdirected acceptance that she needed to feel for herself. When I was alone with her, she was real; when others invaded our world, Maw became totally unreal to me, always trying to make an impression, rarely speaking that which she truly felt and thought. She felt that her house had to be in perfect order before anyone could be admitted, and if it were not, she spent at least five minutes' worth of apologies. She and her house were one, united in some kind of eternal relationship, and perfection was demanded of both.

Now we know that being a good mother who is proud of her children is not enough; we also must love and fulfill ourselves. Now we have an analysis to explain the overcompliance, the cliches of familial dedication.

When my grandmother died, it was spring, and I was attending city college where I had joined the forensics team and won third place at their semiannual speech tournament. I know that my grandmother would have been proud of me. I had seen her eleven months before in the hospital where she was having a siege of emphysema and asthma. "Myra," she told me, "I'll always be very proud of you, and I want you to know that if I had my life to live over, I would learn to speak."

PATTI PATTON

Martha Lifson
Women in Literature,
Independent Study

Immaculate Heart College
Spring 1974

VERDE: A PORTRAIT

I want and want and want: words; to be able to draw with them, to use them to create more than stick-figures. I know I have some skill, but my words are still fragile. Still I offer you a figure named Verde, whom I call my mother.

Her dusky olive skin lies under a mask of pale make-up. High cheekbones sit in this square face punctuated by a cleft chin. Only the mouth is less angular; soft, wide, and restless, her lips are usually colored a bright red.

When freed from its permanent waves, her hair hangs straight and black to her collar. Loving Care #80 Natural Black. It used to shine with a coal-black all its own. Occasionally Ms. Clairol isn't consulted early enough and a sliver of silver appears at the part: the loveliest white hair I've ever seen, but it's never allowed to last.

Her body has a solidness about it; the hips are wide, the legs too well-fleshed, the breasts hang heavy when not in a 38B "uplift" bra. Large-boned, she is neither tall nor short, though she claims that "in her day" her 5'5" were considered tall. Time has left its sign in her eyes too, clouding the once startling-blue irises. Now more grey than blue, they sit in a nest of wrinkled brown shadows stretching nearly from cheek to brow.

My mother's Louisiana birth is revealed by her voice: Southern spiced with French, French honeyed by the South. She's primarily of Accadian-French descent, with a portion of German and a dash of Spanish in her background. Cajun, Creole. "A real coon-ass from Looziana: ah, a Cajun Queen," as my father would say. At different times my mother's been asked if she's Indian, Mexican, Jewish, Italian--all to her southern-white discomfort.

With a heavy hand she puts on the pink and white cream make-up.

There is a portrait of Verde taken when she was eighteen: her head thrown back, held high by a long graceful neck, mouth in a wide smile, her eyes glowing, black curls falling about her shoulders. In this picture she does seem tall, even sitting down. It seems clear that at eighteen Verde owned the world and ruled it sweetly.

But as my mother would be quick to say, she hasn't had an easy life. Born and raised on the Gulf Coast, her father Peter owned the town fish and grocery market. He'd catch the merchandise each morning before opening the store. His grandfather emigrated from Germany; his father settled in southeastern Louisiana.

My grandmother took care of the house and chickens. Marie was well-grounded in the bayou, being by birth a Fontenot with a mother whose maiden name had also been Fontenot.

Bernice. Vernice. Verde.

The priest, misunderstanding her parents, baptized my mother Bernice instead of Vernice. It's made little difference: she's always used Vernice, always been called Verde.

I know little of her childhood apart from the occasional anecdotes she has related: crossing a stream filled with alligators, by way of a log; traveling by ferry-boat to the big city of Lake Charles--then a half day's journey, now less than an hour by car; having to learn English at school because French was spoken at home; walking x numer of miles to school each day.

There are also the tales of her father's sweet temper and Marie's practical jokes, which, it seems, Verde imitated at times. One of the stories is of how Verde and a friend once locked two sisters (also friends) into the coalhouse outside their school. She was about nine and meant to release Maxine and Mercedes when recess ended but wandered off to play, forgetting about the captives. Another student found them, tear-stained and soot-covered, later.
But they are all still friends.

My mother speaks of her childhood in terms of funny stories, but when she talks of her adolescence, of being a young girl in a country town, the tone changes. This was evidently a time of both pain and pride.

At sixteen she was tall, thin, large-boned; her awkward body embarrassed her. Too shy to tell her mother she wanted a brassiere, Verde tried to make one using a slip, strips of cotton, and safety pins. It was during this year that she was relieved to find herself menstruating. And through a neighbor woman's intervention, Marie bought Verde her first bra. In some way these changes must have been very important to her, for Verde's life at seventeen seems quite different.

It was then that the Cajun Queen came to her throne. Charming, vivacious, beautiful, popular, and naive: this is the picture Verde paints of herself in her late teens.

But the stories are not consistent. Verde is at first Amanda Wingfield entertaining her gentlemen callers; abruptly she becomes a self-righteous young woman secure in the knowledge that all men are interested in "just one thing." At the height of her popularity, my mother used a variety of tactics to keep her virtue. Her first fiance, Dallas, tried to go too far one evening. The next day he explained the scratches on his face by saying he'd been attacked by a wild cat.

She did an excellent job: it was only on her wedding night that Verde learned of the male erection, which startled and frightened her. To state the obvious, my mother was never told anything about sex.

My parents married when she was nineteen and Frank twenty-one, after a brief courtship. He was a traveling salesman who happened into the fishmarket in the spring of 1938 only to be enraptured by the owner's daughter. The wedding took place at the end of the summer.

Rural Louisiana circa 1938 was poor. So Frank and Verde lived with her parents the first few years of their marriage. Frank left selling for a more stable occupation: he became manager of the local funeral home.

Her first child was born a year after the wedding; the birth was a nightmare. Verde had decided to give birth at home rather than make the trip to the hospital in Lake Charles. She never has liked to travel. Dr. Carter, typical country doctor, was in attendance as well as Frank, who fainted shortly after Verde bit his hand. There were complications--many--and Verde was butchered in the process of freeing Patrick Robin from her womb. Fortunately, Frank had access to the company ambulance, in which he rushed mother and child to the hospital.

The first two decades of their marriage saw another son, James Louis, born three years after Pat; the death of Verde's father; a move into Lake Charles with Marie in tow; my own birth whan Jay was ten.

Frank changed jobs often during these years; somewhere along the line he began to drink. Or perhaps he took to drink and lost the ideal of steady employment among the bars on the outskirts of Lake Charles. Verde was frequently ill. So much so that Pat was raised more by grandmother than mother, a fact which led to much conflict between these two women.

Verde is a person of consuming emotions which run the gamut from scorching rage to soul-deep humor. Some of my most pleasant memories of her are of times when she and I catch each other's eye, grasping simultaneously some absurdity, and collapse in mutual laughter. Panic can overtakeher just as quickly and completely. Or jealousy, sorrow, love, hate, anger. Verde in a fit of temper is memorable. The eyes flash, the voice grows shrill, harsh, loud: expletives blast forth. She has thrown anything within reach in her fury, but more often, it is her hands, open to slap or clenched into hard fists, which lash out--usually at Frank.

Despite both personal and financial difficulties, by the mid-fifties Frank had established his own business in painting and was making payments on a home and a new car. These were the "good times" for the family. Not that there was money,--for there's never been money--but for once at least, there was credit. The good times lasted about a year.

Hurricane Audrey struck first, ripping the roof from the new home, spoiling Verde's hardwood floors, raining out Frank's most costly job. Pat had a nervous breakdown shortly after starting college. Marie was growing old and sickly. Then Frank, in the midst of painting the newly built federal housing project, disappeared. For reasons best known to himself, Daddy got drunk one day and left.

Before long Verde had moved her brood into one of the now-completed projects where we lived for four years. One of the redeeming features of this house was the honeysuckle that vined over the window of the bedroom I shared with Verde and Marie. From a distance the windblown vines, covered with white blossoms, appeared fragile and insubstantial. It was only when examined at close range that one could detect how stubbornly the plant clung to the bricks and screen, new tendrils reaching ever higher. The scent of the honeysuckle carried on the spring breeze was deliciously sweet, inviting. But to know the vine in the heat of summer when the bedroom was filled with its cloying perfume was to know its true potency.

Verde without Frank was like the honeysuckle: at once helpless and fragile, a southern woman abandoned by her man, yet proud and determined to survive. Rather than toppling with her support removed, Verde became suddenly independent and took charge of her life.

Pat painted a portrait of Verde during this time, oil on wood. She never liked this picture; it showed too clearly the price for change. When Verde looked at it, she saw that she was nearing forty, her neck was long and skinny, her face gaunt, her eyes wrinkling at the corners. What she didn't see was the pride evident in the turn of her neck, the determined set of her chin, the fire in her eyes. Though she didn't like the way that she looked, she knew that men still found her charming. That charm, seldom if ever directed at Frank, was used to procure favors large and small.

To Verde, her strength lay in knowing when to play the damsel in distress. She took full advantage of every remnant of southern "chivalry" to get what she wanted, never acknowledging her power, even to herself.

Frank reappeared after an absence of eighteen months: in a hospital in southeast Texas with a broken back. It took two major operations and months of convalescing before he could walk again. When he was able to return to work, it was as a salesman in a department store. 1962 brought the first opportunity for him to regain lost ground: he was offered the position of managing a small store in Phoenix, Arizona. Verde never has liked to travel.

Having made the first major move from Lake Charles to Phoenix, we became one of the many transient families traveling across the country at the command of the company, following the promise of more money and a better life. In seven years we moved five times, living in four different cities from Arizona to Florida, always ending up in Phoenix. In 1969 my parents settled there.

Verde: Aren't you wearing a bra? Don't they wear bras in California any more?
--Oh, mother, what difference does it make?

Verde: You should wear a bra--it would help give you a little bit of a shape.
--You think so?

Verde: Of course.
--The thing is, I am wearing one.

Verde and Frank live in a rather shabby two-bedroom duplex on the edge of downtown Phoenix. The walls are in need of fresh paint, the furnishings mismatched and haphazardly arranged. Paradoxically, Pat's paintings, both representational and abstract, cover nearly every foot of dirty wall space. Another distinctive note are Frank's recent attempts at bottle-cutting: several odd-shaped vases complemented by plastic flowers. Knicknacks adorn the built-in bookshelves. The overall tone is like that of a cheap science fiction movie: out of sync.

Residing with them are two cats and a dog. Each was one of the children's pets, left behind as we moved on.

Verde: You know, your father and I aren't as young as we used to be. . . . You learn a lot living with a person most of your life. Never let a man know you care about him--if you do, he'll use it to hurt you. Take your dad: I used to cry and fuss everytime he went out and got drunk. And he kept on doing it and every time it hurt me. I used to show how much it hurt, how much I cared. When he was young, he was goodlooking . . . and I loved him. He was always drinking to hurt me. But he's changed. . . . One day I told him that it didn't matter anymore--that here were lots of men who knew how to treat a good woman if he didn't. Of course it did matter--but I didn't tell him that. Now I just laugh and tell him, "Get drunk"--why should I care if he kills himself drinking? I'd be free then, I say. Since then, you know, he doesn't drink so much anymore. But he's changed. . . . You know something? So have I.

CLAIRE CHISLER PHILLIPS

Florence Howe
Introduction to Women's Studies

SUNY/College at Old Westbury
Fall 1973

EXCERPTS FROM HER JOURNAL

9-15-73

Beverly Jones* describes some of the games that husbands and wives play. In these games the needs of the husbands battle with the needs of the wives. The final result is a destroyed relationship. The husbands destroy their wives' egos, and more problems occur when the wife is a mother. The worst is the "Tired Mother Syndrome."

I agree with her observations about the TMS. When I first read this article three years ago, I was horrified by a description of my own mother in the Tired Mother Syndrome. That is why I believed what Jones had to say. Reading about it three years ago, I was frightened to the extent that I never wanted children until I could be sure that I would not be trapped in a similar life. . . .

From late grade-school years to the present my most satisfhing relationships, with one or two exceptions, have been with girls or women near my age. Boys have said to me that they wished they could be as open with their male friends as girls are with their friends. I have felt that female friendships were characterized by unusual warmth compared to those of boys. . . . From that standpoint I would suggest that women use the strength they already have in their relationships with each other to explore redefinitions of motherhood, marriage. . . . The model of the woman-to-woman friendship can be used in those redefinitions.

---

*"The Dynamics of Marriage and Motherhood," in Robin Morgan, ed., Sisterhood is Powerful (Vintage, 1970), pp. 46-61.

9-17-73

The discussion today was better than Thursday's. I suppose I say that because there was more said with which I agree. I am amazed at some of the opinions about motherhood. Some of the people in the class are so adamant about the mother's performing mighty tasks. I like to look at those statements as if I were the child of one of those people. One thing I would say is: give children some credit for maturing on their own. Not everything is in the hands of mothers. Maybe if we can transfer more responsibilities to children, we can expect less from mothers. . . .

From this class so far, I have been more attuned to the treatment of mothers in the movies I have seen and conversations I have heard in the past week. In all the articles, books and discussions I have read or been involved in concerning feminism, very little has ever been said about mothers, apart from what ought to be done about the institution of the family and sex roles. I think it is significant that I have not heard much about how we feel about our mothers.

The way in which we are using literature in this course helped me gain an awareness of the position of mothers. This has been the first time in a classroom situation I have heard a distinction made between analyzing literature as a work of art and using it for its affective potential. My response to literature has always wavered between these two possibilities, mainly because my English teachers stressed objectivity. I was never sure how much subjective response I was allowed to express. Having Florence make this distinction and encourage affective responses in the class has helped me relax when I read literature for this course.

9-20-73

Today was the day that Jo led the discussion on mothers. We outlined problems and consequences of the mother's role. Then someone wanted to list the satisfactions of being a mother. It became obvious that there are some conflicts within the group about the subject of mothering. I got pretty angry myself, but it came to the surface as being annoyed at several things going on in the class. I was sure of the tension when I felt a tight feeling in my stomach when I listed "controlling others" as a "satisfaction" of motherhood. Some people seemed shocked. I wanted to be able to say I believe some women enjoy raising children, but I think too many people in the class have unrealistically high ideals of what motherhood should be. Most of these women also happen to be mothers, and I am not.

The issue of "control" should not be such an explosive one.

I suggested it because I believe many mothers, especially unemployed mothers, turn their energies to trying to control their children's lives since they have so little influence in other areas of living. Denying the desire to control is absurd, because control or power issues appear constantly between people. . . . I would like to know how other people in the class would respond if I said there was a control issue in our class as well. . . .

9-21-73

After reading "Motherhood: Who Needs It?"

I thoroughly enjoyed this article. It was more like an editorial than an essay, but the sarcasm provoked in me feelings of "finally, some justice." I think the rudeness Betty Rollin writes about in the first paragraph is needed. Irreverence can bring out some of people's most submerged feelings; and motherhood is still a topic for reverence.

Rollin's main points all go under the heading of "some good reasons for not having babies." One is overpopulation; others are: financial burden, the strain on the man-woman relationship, conflicts between sexuality and motherhood, and the hard work and responsibilities involved in child-rearing. These are all good reasons for us to question whether or not we're going to have children. . . .

I am worried about the lack of understanding on both sides of the controversy. We tend to become very irrational about the subject of motherhood. I found Rollin's "rudeness" refreshing, but I think some of her later comments only add fuel to the polarization of people on the subject. One sentence is: "The experiment mentioned earlier--where the baby ducks followed vacuum cleaners instead of their mothers--indicates that what passes for love from baby to mother is merely a rudimentary kind of object attachment." It is unnecessarily abrasive to compare mothers to vacuum cleaners and ducks to babies. "Object attachment" is a dehumanizing phrase. Since the mother is a person, not an object, why not say "person attachment?" This would change the meaning of the sentence, though, since it was meant to strip the relationship of the mother and child of any romanticism. Even though I think looking at love from the baby's perspective is useful, her comment is simplistic. What is worse, I think she may have misinterpreted the meaning of the experiment. . . . In any case, the example is not worth the reaction from motherhood defenders who will jump up and down about mother love. . . .

None of Rollin's opinions could be interpreted as terrifying. At the end of the article she says nothing could be worse than a world without children and that motherhood should not disappear. Her main argument is that the Myth needs to be shouted down. I agree entirely.

The issues raised in the article are very important right now. I sense that motherhood is an area largely unacted upon by many women who are already redefining their lives in other sex-role related ways. That it is unacted upon is significant. It is a very sensitive subject: how are we going to combine feminism and motherhood? Under what conditions can women be feminists and mothers, too? Since women will continue to be mothers, this article helps to emphasize that the institution of motherhood needs drastic overhauling. To begin that task, first we need to examine our assumptions about being mothers and become less defensive about them.

9-24-73

I wanted us to talk more about being mothered. . . . We could have discussed how mother-daughter relationships vary in terms of dependence, affection, and closeness, and how each of these characteristics relate to each other. Can you be close but not dependent, independent and also affectionate? What would be a desirable mixture for a daughter and mother, and would the same mixture be desirable for both of them?

9-25-73

After reading: "Having a Baby Inside Me Is the Only Time I'm Really Alive"

This woman raises some very difficult questions. I do not think she intended to look at the problems from an ethical position, but most of the questions raised are ethical ones. Some of the questions I thought of when I read her statements are:

- Should you have children when you cannot "afford" them?
- How much money should you have before you plan on a child?
- Should you plan children, or limit the number you will have?
- Should pro-contraception groups pressure people not to have children or suggest that it is wrong to have them?
- Should the State, through social workers, select the poor for a campaign against large families and leave other economic

classes to decide their own course?

- Should the State, through social workers, come into the homes of poor women and critize their methods of raising a family, when the same does not happen to middle-class women?

- Should a poor woman, knowing that she will probably always be poor and that most of her children will be poor, go ahead and have children in the hopes that maybe at least one will "make it" out of poverty?

Each one of these questions could be the subject of an entire paper. . . . We do need to think about the particular problems of poor and black women when we talk about contraceptives and child-rearing. A poor woman has so little control over her life that control of her body is possibly even more significant for her than for other women. Her children are state property when she is on welfare; should her body become that too?

11/15/73

A few weeks ago I was puzzled about the absence of literature on mothers among feminists.* Jo suggested today that there is a pattern among women who break with tradition and are motivated to "achieve." They are alienated from a traditional mother and refuse to identify with her. They must find a role for themselves which is unlike their mothers'. This may explain why mothers have been ignored in the feminist movement. We had to break with the past, and for some of us, our mothers symbolized the past for women. We do not want to be reminded of our mothers.

CHARLOTTE LEVEY

Mary Anne Ferguson
Images of Women in Literature

University of Massachusetts, Boston
Spring 1973

THE MOST DANGEROUS STEREOTYPE:
A RESPONSE TO WRIGHT MORRIS'S "THE RAM IN THE THICKET"

Last night my thirteen-year-old daughter Jennifer had a dream. She was being pursued up and down the streets near our house by an unknown person, and that person was female. She reached home finally without being caught, and found her father downstairs in our tenants' apartment trying to care for their newborn baby. He was feeding it mush, she said, and had spilled dry baby cereal all over the kitchen floor. As the dream ended she was helping him to sweep up the mess.

Jenny's dream made me squirm. I had a strong feeling that the unknown pursuer was I, and that the dream was a reaction to my aggressive behavior of late, my insistence on the sharing of housework and stubbornness in demanding that things sometimes go *my* way. My mother was the kind of dominating woman Wright Morris described, and I had many nightmares as a child in which she, undisguised, was the pursuer. I was terrified of her in the daytime, so it's no wonder she stalked me in my dreams. When I was fourteen my father died suddenly and prematurely of a cerebral hemorrhage, and I believed that she had killed him, that is, that she made his life so unpleasant that he didn't care to live. After my father died, my mother was forced to work and discovered, to her surprise, that her modest job as manager of a china shop gave her more satisfaction than she had ever felt as a wife and mother. She was a woman of great energy whose urge for power had always been thwarted and perverted into a need to dominate the only area that was hers, her home and family.

I can see this now and sympathize with her in spite of the terrible destructiveness of her behavior during my years at home. But the specter is there every time I demand time or consideration or help from my husband and children. I feel myself becoming a harridan, cold and implacable. The stereotype of the dominating woman is the most dangerous one for those of us who, with semi-raised consciousnesses, are trying to reshape our marriages and our lives. It is dangerous because, like every stereotype, there is some truth to it; women like Violet Ormsby (in Morris's "The Ram in the Thicket") do exist, and their aggressiveness is unattractive and frightening. The problem lies in there being no antidote to the stereotype in fiction. I can't remember ever reading a story in which each partner was powerful and self-fulfilling and the marriage survived. A strong wife implies a subservient husband. Marriage, in fiction, is truly a battle of the sexes in which only one partner can be dominant.

"The Ram in the Thicket" disturbed and frightened me. Surely I am not Violet Ormsby, or am I? I haven't made breakfast for my family except occasionally in four years. My husband and children cook, wash dishes, and clean house. They wash their own clothes. My husband does all the food shopping in exchange for my doing his laundry. I do a specified third of the housework, and I gripe a lot when people don't accomplish the other two thirds. And when exam time comes, people tiptoe around me as though I were sick or insane. From a feminist point of view I am to be admired for fighting (what an ugly, unfeminine word) my way out of housewifely slavery, but oh, the guilt and uncertainty of it! How much am I like my mother? Do my children secretly fear me? Am I unmanning my husband?

One member of my women's rap group calls me "the cat who walks alone," by which she means that for as long as she has known me (some fourteen years) I have basically done as I liked. She's wrong, but from her perspective it must seem that way. She was the perfect housekeeper and mother for ten years in a loveless marriage where she truly was a badly treated servant after the style of *Diary of a Mad Housewife*. The full reason for her masochistic tenacity I'll never understand, but surely some of her inability to ask for anything for herself stemmed from the fear of seeming a dominating woman. The guilt that fell on her when she divorced is still an oppressive weight, manifested mostly in her treatment of her kids, who eat what they please (mostly pop-tarts) and behave as they please (mostly awful).

It appears to me that even powerful well-known women have not been able to shed the fear of being domineering, as they seem compelled to over-emphasize some aspect of their femininity. Some represent themselves as sexual tigresses (Germaine Greer), some say they are really timid (Gloria Steinem, Baroness Jane Goodall), some publicly yearn to be mothers (Elizabeth Taylor, Sophia Loren), and certain accomplished middle-aged women exude a motherliness that belies their achievement (Margaret Mead, Queen Elizabeth).

Most women feel a need for the affection of men and fear the loss of love that would follow if they displayed their powerfulness untempered by qualities belonging to the stereotype of femininity.

Men too have been victims of the stereotype of the dominating woman. Roger Ormsby, Wlater Mitty, Caspar Milquetoast, our culture abounds with examples of castrated men, and the implication is that a man is not a man to the extent he allows aggressive behavior from his wife. It's really impossible for a man to take on domestic chores or otherwise accede to his wife's requests for equality in marriage without some small echo of regret, no matter how strong his ego or how much he agrees intellectually with the tenets of feminism. So that married women who love their husbands and children, yet feel the rightness of demanding equal treatment as people, are caught in a double bind. Aside from the possibility of losing the love of their families, they know that they cannot demand and insist without doing some small damage to their husbands' good feelings about themselves. There is no solution to this problem, as far as I can see, but it may comfort us to understand that during any period of change some people are hurt, yet they survive. And we can look forward to the time when marriages between two strong, self-assertive people are so commonplace that the old dominating woman stereotype will become an historical amusement and Wright Morris merely a product of his time.

GAIL LYNCH

Mary Cohen
Women in Literature

Temple University
Fall 1973

You see a queer logic in my heresies, Mother,
your own faith grown dim
these past years, at this very table
with the fruit growing thin skins, a
delicate aging,
small blood vessels breaking beneath your eyes.

I sat here as a child, bird-like, chattering;
red carnations bent beneath your brilliant hands.
Then, moving in silent blessings, with
reflective grace your fingers would descend,
bloodless, white as candles,
snapping stems.

Now you and I are strangers,
draining our cups in polite reverie, in
memory of times we shared the same deceptions
the pulse in your throat is trembling.
Like two weird sisters
we hasten tragedy, dismantling our sentiments
and mysteries at a random moment.

KAREN STERN

(poem i will send you)

before there were doctors and
lawyers and
indian chiefs
there were those who
breathed life into them
who carried them
nine months
bellies, heavy and proud

before there were poets and
critics and
priests
there were those who fed them
their first drops of milk
who nursed them and
dressed them
held tiny hands
that someday would grow

before there were beggars and
merchants and
kings
there were expectant wombs
warm and fertile
taken by surprise
by the life within

before there was me
there was you

you, who forgave my childish whims
whose tears washed with mine
you, who protected me
from the nocturnal creatures
that lurked in sleeping closets

this is not a new story
it is ageless and timeless

yet we put it aside for you
one day
mark it on a calendar
name it
and place a flower in a vase

(poem i will not)

mother
the life i tell to you is a lie
we cannot know each other
i give you
a bare skeleton of a life
a life composed of bone facts
which ring empty
without inner organs of pulsing blood
they exist for you, just the same

if i cut through the bone
you cry, "no more, no more"
as if watching a violent thriller
you hide your eyes from the gore and guts
so i have laid down the knife

i stand in your bedroom, now
a carefully labelled laboratory specimen

and wonder about your skeleton

is it taken out at night
when you pretend to be enjoying?
is there a special one prepared for father?
do you wrap up the thighs and breast and back
and store them in the freezer with the other meat?
mother, is it ever put away?

on mother's day
i cried the tears of a child, a mother
i cried both these tears
then stopped, dressed my skeleton
and thought of you
dressing
for your special day

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Many women's studies classes encourage students to write their own autobiographies. Indeed, in reading these histories of women, one senses that this work--the record of a generation of women--is perhaps the single most important contribution of women's studies. Students write eloquently about themselves--their origins, their families, their fears, their frustrations, their work, their husbands and lovers and children, their sexuality, their hope, their anxiety, their awakening pride.

Reading such documents, one soon recognizes both the diversity of these women's experiences and the reiteration of certain common themes in their lives and work. They come from poor homes and wealthy ones, from country and city, from East, West, Midwest, and South. Most are white, but by no means all. Many speak of their working class origins. Many are older women, many have children of their own.

And the common themes? These are only a few:

--the sense of inadequacy: not pretty enough, not smart enough, not rich enough, not cool enough, not a good enough housekeeper, wife, mother--or feminist;

--the shame and anger at a sexual violation--so many memories of a childhood abuse, a rape, a forced participation in the sex act before the birth of desire;

--pregnancy, wanted and unwanted; abortion; childbirth;

--the fragmented energies--work, school, home; and the accompanying guilt;

--the awakening sense of self, of sisterhood, of community, of possibility, of power.

Of the works that follow, the longest, Through the Looking Glass Finally, is the work not of one woman but of many, the product of a collective effort on the part of one ongoing class in Women's Biography at California State College, Sonoma. As its authors know, this autobiography (edited in a marathon three-day session with members of the collective to a third its original length) is itself only a part of a larger though less deliberate whole.

The individual pieces represent classes from each area of the country. Ifueko Egharevba, writing for a literature class at the University of Massachusetts, tells of her childhood in Nigeria. Nancy Black, a student in a course on Class, Race, and Sex at California State University, Sacramento, recalls her own unique encounters with racism. Ellen Berard Kirchner's paper for a psychology course at Wayne County Community College in Detroit confronts a subject that too few have been willing to recognize as a women's issue: her struggle with drugs and alcohol. And the excerpt from Julie Dodd Wood's statement, written for a literature class at the University of West Virginia, concludes with the note of feminist anger and awareness that sounds so frequently in these writings from the first five years of women's studies.

Writing it out obviously becomes, for the individual student, a liberating act. It is, however, more than just therapeutic, more even than consciousness-raising (though it is both of these). Students in these classes, in sharing such work with one another, are deliberately participating in and perpetuating a tradition of women's writings about women's lives.

Women's Biography Classes
California State College, Sonoma
1972-1974

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS FINALLY: A COLLECTIVE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Edited by the Women's Biography Collective: Sara Armstrong, Liz Avakian, Johanna Bochner, Carol Denison, Tina Dungan, Louise Earp, Paula Hammett, Dee Love, Catherine Macfarlane, Bobbsye Sayre, J. J. Wilson, Lisa Wilson, Han Wingate, and Keri Zacher.

I suppose I learned how to give up being a teacher first.

Reading the writing that was done in the class, biographical and autobiographical, I learned to see my students in so many more dimensions than just their student-hood, to appreciate the excruciating choices everyone is constantly making, the complexities of all of our lives, though we come together so politely and calmly those few hours of each week.

I learned never to take anyone's life for granted again, to admire the heroism and self-sacrifice of every-woman, to respect the honesty and insight of these self-scrutinies, and to look at my own life with more attention. I learned that my own life was funny and even dramatically instructive.

I learned to share the joy of all this--that wasn't hard. I learned to share the responsibility of handling all this material--that was surprisingly hard. Selfish, lazy, greedy, autonomous, bossy, insecure, I don't know what it was I had become as I labored through college, secretarial jobs, graduate school, and then the long lonely labor of the doctoral dissertation. Now I can hardly think about thinking without the many-fingered touching of our collective thoughts, our decisions that got made so organically they brought no blame or glory with them. To go back to working in my solitary study would be

---

[*] Lines from "Conversation with my Mother," by permission of Lynda Koolish, previously printed in Journeys of the Living: Poems, Photographs and Drawings (1973); passage from To Deliver Me of My Dreams (1974), by permission of Liz Avakian.

like trying to play frisbee by myself.

In working with the Women's Biography Group, I forgot what my strengths were, but I was able to forget my weaknesses too. I, who had always been the best, the liveliest, the most enduring, the most committed, gave up all those superlatives with nothing but relief, learning furiously to respect the young women who drove forty miles to a Sunday afternoon meeting, who donated willingly their one day off from grim jobs working in department store lunchrooms, hatcheries, night-shifts at the bakery to come pore over endless pages of typescript and pale, purloined xerox--who is "best" in a situation like that? We all are, and I learned to appreciate all of us, our beauties, our toughness, our caring attention to the discovering and shaping of our shared myths and dreams, as well as our infinite capacities for peach milkshakes, fig newtons, work, and one another.

-- J. J. Wilson

* * * * *

Somewhere along the way in growing up I lost something. I can remember having it as a child, but by the time I entered high school it had disappeared. It's strange that I never felt its presence until it was gone and never realized how or when it left me, so quietly and subtly did it leave. Self-confidence? That was part of it, but more than that, I had lost the feeling that I could do anything, be anything, have anything. My path was limited because I was female. Does it have to be a ritual in our process of maturing? Must we sacrifice our ambitions, goals, aggressions, and intellects to become acceptable females?

I grew as the dwarfed bonsai trees grow--carefully watched, never given enough nourishment, and clipped to maintain proper proportions, stunting the overall growth. This treatment produces a delicate miniature of a normal willow, pomegranate, or rose tree, in many ways beautiful. But for me this practice has always been connected with an ancient Chinese custom--that of binding the feet of female infants. Both practices deform and stunt natural growth, inhibiting what nature meant to be. The tall, spreading limbs of a tree that grows freely, that reaches toward the sun, are more beautiful to me than stunted, crooked branches of early-old trees. The healthy, running, calloused feet of children are more beautiful than doll feet. Free, mischievous, sensitive, excited, inquisitive young girls are more beautiful than tea party pink dresses, patent leather shoes, and curtsies.

* * * * *

Who am I? Daughter of my father's name; my mother's blood.

Elam, my father, is always making people aware of the fact that his name is male spelled backwards. Yes, he's terribly proud of that.

Roberta . . . his little Robert girl.

During my childhood years my father had several nervous breakdowns. He was almost always depressed, sometimes quietly, but more often angrily so. His moods were in constant fluctuation. My mother used to make a game of it. She'd tell us all to tiptoe around the house, so as not to disturb Daddy, but she'd make it fun by telling us to pretend we were "walking on eggs" and we mustn't crack any. Of course we cracked thousands of "eggs" every day which led each of us to believe in our silent agony that we were the cause of his depression.

When I was seventeen I left my father's angry, sad eyes . . . I left my mother's tiresome games . . . my mother it seems has never cracked an egg . . . I can see her now, busily gluing back the cracked shells I've left behind.

He had some disturbing conflict with my brother and I remember his threatening to kill my brother and talking about how he would then go to the gas chamber. And he had a thing about women. I remember his calling me a floozy in the eighth grade because I was going to a dance and I looked good. And I was as far from being a slut as Pollyanna. And I remember searching for his gun because he was going to kill mother because she was going back to school at Sonoma State, thinking of divorce because she was tired of having been his nigger for twenty-one years. And I remember how my mother jumped off a feed storage bin, like a silo, because she was pregnant with her sixth child and she didn't want to bring another child into such a fucked-up world. But she didn't even break a bone and the child is now a beautiful seven-year-old . . . And he would have shot every man I've been with . . . He'd even probably shoot me and I'm his daughter . . . But I relate to him now as I would to a character in Shakespeare or to Captain Ahab. He's my mythological character.

To my friends, my father became a sort of guru. He expounded the virtues of meditation, self-actualization, acceptance, and love. My friends flocked to him, and he healed them . . . My friends, but not I. This extraordinarily loving man couldn't accept his daughter. For me he had no healing words. I would come in when he was talking to a colleague, and as he swam before my eyes, inform him that I was on acid. "Do you need a doctor?" he would ask. "No," I would say, and depart disappointed. Odd, to complain of a permissive parent instead of an overprotective one. I suffered from a surplus of freedom, and I abused it to no avail.

David and I were used to living without a father. We did not want him to come back. He was an intruder. I didn't want to talk to him anymore and I found his affectionate pats and hugs repulsive. It had something to do with pride. It was as if he was trying to make up for being such a bastard. He was hardly ever home and when he was, he just lay around snoring or he sat on the john, and he thought as long as we had money and a nice house and an occasional hug from him, he was being a good father and husband.

I was my father's daughter and learned very young how to win approval from the male sex. I was Daddy's little angel, and competition for my mother. If I wanted anything I went to Daddy and batted my pretty brown eyes and it was mine. Including punishment for my mother when I had been scolded. The first eleven years I learned how to make mother mad, how to scream back at mother when she got mad, and how to make Daddy mad at mother for getting mad at me. It was lovely from my point of view. Then very unexpectedly my father dropped dead of a heart attack.

When I think of my mother, the image that comes to mind is gold lame pants and bobby socks.

My mother was kind and gentle and good. I was never that close to her, but I loved her very much, and I strive for her good qualities. She gave me her dreamy side, her intuitiveness and cautiousness. We understood each other without too much verbal communication.

I remember distinctly my mother's coming to pick me up at school one day. I jumped into the car with a perfunctory "Hi," modeled on the casual attitude I'd seen my schoolmates use toward their parents, stretched out in the back seat with my feet out the window (again a carefully imitated stance), and, opening a comic book I'd just copped off a schoolmate, prepared myself to read all the way (some fifteen miles) back home. Mother drove stoically along, like a chauffeur or at least a grown-up, for about four miles and finally burst out at me, bored and hurt and ignored and self-pitying: "Don't read that now! Come up front and talk with me! I've been all morning by myself, drove up here to get you alone, and now I want some company!" I never forgot, and from that time on, I could never treat my mother as merely a mother, but had to see her as a human with needs and feelings.

About a year later, my sweet and gentle mother suffered a nervous breakdown. She was hospitalized at Napa State Hospital for about four months. The county paid for a housekeeper of our own choosing to come in and take care of the nine children; no easy task. I missed my mother terribly. The few times she came home for day visits or a weekend pass were worse than if she hadn't come home to visit at all. I couldn't bear to see her leave, not understanding at all why she couldn't be home with us.

When my mother came home from the hospital she was changed. She showed me the scars on her temples and explained a little why she had gone to the hospital and what they had done to make her "better."

Thinking about my mother, I am of several minds regarding what I see as her eventual capitulation: she chose her life, and if she let my father wear her out, it was her own doing; she was a highly unusual woman who was defeated by poverty and struggle; she sacrificed everything for the man she loved and the children she bore and I'll be goddamned if I'll let myself sacrifice so much, for what seems so little; the preceding sentiments make me too different from her to be able to comprehend or judge her life. I see only the results--her ruin and death. By that I judge her. I also judge my father for his wasting of her, a brilliant woman. Only after her death did I begin to see little things: for her birthday, my father might give her a Kandinsky print, when it would have touched her to have something personal, like a nightgown or perfume . . . and she preferred Miro, anyway.

The only "woman's job" I was trained by my mother to do was shop. She took me to sales and shopping centers all over town, and went on comparative shopping sprees with me until I was old enough to do this work on my own. What this mostly entailed was covering a lot of ground, buying very little, and having my purchases graded as to quality and price when I got home.

My mother, hunched shoulders and slow walk show her age. In her jaw rests her personality: stubborn and damned determined. Only her soft red lips to this day give her away. A paradox and she knows it. She prefers mystery and secrecy to open communication. She enjoys power but has never known how best to use it. One thousand miles away she intuits when things are going well for me and when the blues get hold of my soul.

For years my mother led a very closed life. It revolved around her home and her children. Unfortunately for my brother, my father, and myself, she vented her bitterness and anger, letting it explode and pour out onto the surface periodically. Her outbursts were like lava, fiery, coming from deep within her seemingly stable exterior.

"Why me, Mama?"
"What have I done?"

I could not bring any of my friends home because Mom was usually smashed and staggering around in the living room. Pop would come home and raise hell, and then everyone would start fighting. Bickering over dinner further heightened my loss of appetite. Small wonder that I weighed only fifty-eight pounds for two years! We tried to get Mom to go to A.A., but she refused. I felt that she had let me down because she had destroyed my image of what I thought a mother should be. Years of anger, shame, and resentment followed instead of love. Of the three children, she liked me the best because I was a girl child. This added to my guilt because I could not return the affection. I had been hurt too much.

You are my mother; therefore I must love you.

And that is why we love our mothers and don't want to be like them.

Mommy, what will you do
When your mother dies?

Only in the last two or three years have I known that I love her. Before that I was never sure. During all those years before the little arteries in her brain began to break she was intensely my mother, and her power over me was enormous. Whether I was ten, twenty, thirty, or forty, she never let me forget what it had cost her to bear me and raise me.

In a sense she became my child and I her mother. She was no longer the woman who had lain frigid, obedient but raging, in her husband's arms. Until her marriage night her ignorance of sex was complete, and my father could not comprehend her shock. She never got over it. For her, sex was a nightmare that lasted until her husband's death. He was puzzled, hurt and angered by her attitude, but never understanding, and he insisted on regular and frequent satisfaction.

Although we children didn't know it, this lay at the bottom of their constant conflict, which frequently erupted into loud quarrels. We always took Mother's side, because in subtle but highly effective ways she made us feel that Father was a brute. During the family rows Mother would weep pitifully and proclaim herself a failure. I would embrace her and assure her she was not a failure, feeling, in the illogical way that children have, that I was the failure and that my chief aim in life must be to make her happy.

My mother, my father
how did you touch
when you made me?

When I was eight years old my parents separated. My father left one day. He did not return. I told friends he was on a business trip to New York City, a very long business trip. Every day my mother cried. I saw her body wither and her love atrophy. I thought she no longer loved me. I did not understand.

In my whole life I had only known one person whose parents were divorced, and everyone gossiped about them. It took a long time for me to admit to anyone that my parents had separated. Later I met more people who lived with one parent than two.

Bounce, bounce, bounce
I bounce my head against the headboard,
My bed creaks.
Nobody listens to me,
Not my mama, nor my papa.

Every night in our kitchen they fight.
I cry drowning out their voices.
Their rage scares me,
Mama just broke a dish
Bounce harder, Lou,
Sleep, where are you?
Help!

About a month before my fifth birthday, my mother informed me that I was going to have a new little brother or sister. She said that the baby might be born on my birthday. I asked her if the baby could be my birthday present. My mother seemed pleased with the idea and said, "Yes, of course, it will be your birthday present." She obviously had been concerned as to how I might react at giving up my five-year status of being the youngest. With the promise of a real live birthday present--a baby of my very own--I felt so important that I didn't realize what I was giving up. I found out later.

I loved him and always stuck up for him. Later he repaid me by allowing me to come down in his basement to listen to his new records. He lived in our basement, the most fascinating room in the house. He had the room farthest away from my parents; I had the closest one. He painted it black. He played the guitar and got lessons from a member of the future Jefferson Airplane. He went to concerts and saw Bob Dylan. He introduced me to his friends. He even let me do my homework at his desk sometimes. I looked up to him. He had guns and he could ski and surf and he dated girls and was popular. I wanted to be like him. He was cool. And he was a boy.

The only people my age were boys, and in order to play with them I had to prove girls were a necessary part of cowboys' and cops' and robbers' lives. I did.

I was playing in the orchard. I saw my brother standing in the toolshed and heard him call my name. I cantered over. He told me to come in and shut the door, that he had something to show me. I was afraid not to. Inside it was dark and smelled of earth. He unzipped his pants and pulled them down to the ground, saying that if I did not do just what he ordered he would tell Mom and Dad that I smoked cigarettes with Johnny Butterfield behind the poolhouse.

For the next several months he would call me into the toolshed, or if my parents were away make me come into his bedroom and lock the door. He would take off my jeans and underpants and lay me down. He would spread my legs and kneel between them, while I stared up at the ceiling.

My mother suspected something uncomfortable in my behavior, and when she asked me about it, I told her the truth. Then she called my brother into the room and he lied so skillfully that I sobbed in rage.

I was, as my grandmother never failed to remind me, a "girl child" (the opposite of which were "rough men and boys").

One time I was playing house with a little friend. I was three, I think, and she was two. Being the mother, I helped her change her clothes because I knew that's what mothers sometimes did. Just as I was in the process of removing her pants, my mother came into the room. To my amazement, she told the little girl to go home and administered a spanking to me. Vaguely I recall her saying something about not playing nasty games. I didn't think it was nasty until then.

I was in the front yard walking on plastic spike heels that I had gotten for a gift. A boy on a bike came and told me that if I came with him I could have a doll. I climbed his bike and we rode towards newly constructed tract houses. We walked through mud until we reached some trees, which I think were oaks. He hit me and told me to lie down and started to remove my corduroy jumpsuit. I was crying now and wondering where the doll was. He told me to shut up, and I can remember how terrifying these words were. He then undid his pants and hurt me. He hit me again for crying and said that if I cried he'd kill me. He told me not to tell my Mommy what he had done. I remember wanting to go home. I was terribly embarrassed for what had happened and terrified by what a man's body looked like. I remember being lost for a long time, though I couldn't have been very far from my home. With great fear I entered the house where two men with shiny badges awaited me. Mom made them stop asking me questions and I went to bed with relief, not to disclose what had really gone on until I was twelve or thirteen.

Those years in Maryland were the boy-hating ones for us. Joannie got into actual fights with them, defending her fort, throwing stones, chasing, running, calling names. I practiced a smug indifference, and Charlotte simply shied away, horrified at the boys' destructiveness: stoning squirrels, killing snakes, pulling the legs off frogs. . . .

Joannie got a fishing pole and sat out on the dock a lot. She thought she could catch a trout like the ones in Washington. Our other grandfather took us fishing when we went to visit, and we caught lots of delicious rainbow trout. After a few days out on the dock, Joannie finally landed a three-inch lake bass. She put him in a jar and was going to get him an aquarium the next day, but in the morning he was dead, bloated and still on top of the water. We gave him a decent burial at sea, and Joannie promised never again to imprison a free creature. There were tears in our eyes and it was a grey day. Solemn and beautiful, unlike the funerals of men.

One day after running into the girls' gym after an active hour I began to strip for a shower. There it was! Yes, it was blood all right, menstrual blood. Somehow I supposed if I ignored it for the present it might not even be there later. I dressed quickly so no one would find out and went to my last class of the day. When the bell signaled the end of school I got up from my desk and the girl behind me whispered, "You leaked!" and giggled away. Horrors! I looked at the back of my skirt and sure enough a huge dark red stain had soaked through. Although it was the end of the world, I managed to cover the stain sufficiently with my purse held behind me. . . . When I reached home Mom hugged me and talked about womanhood the whole time she fitted me with my very own belt and kotex. Now I was doomed to big breasts and boys just like the other girls. . . . Later, I wrote: "Dear Diary, Today I got my first period, Mom and Ken and Dad are being nice." Then I cried and cried.

i was born
a blue baby with red hair
i hear the scissors cutting into the skin of my
mother's womb
a terrifying ripping of the skin

i was hatched in an incubator seven weeks
then out i popped a bouncing bundle of joy

i spent childhood in fantasies--a witch, a
dwarf, a horse, a tree,
a unicorn, a woman, i could be all or any
no limits to my imagination
the first blood stains hidden underwear under
my bed
i found out i was different from the boy next
door and i cried
i felt i was a freak--
i left in a hurry one day--i wanted to play tag,
to climb trees,
to laugh and sing
i left a dirty napkin in the bathroom exposed--
uncovered--my father
was disgusted
i learned men wanted nothing to do with women's
dirty napkins
i grew older. . . .

Mom gave Joannie and me a booklet called "You're a Young Lady Now." It delicately informed one of the strange ways of puberty. There was a sketch on the cover of an adolescent girl sitting at her frilly dressing table, looking in the mirror at her budding figure, with a dreamy expression on her face. The booklet didn't do anything to prepare one for the agony of menstrual cramps. I thought I was getting the intestinal flu, but alas, it wasn't the flu at all. It was worse. I didn't spend the rest of the day gazing into a vanity mirror (I didn't have one anyway). I felt lousy. I threw up. My insides felt like they were being crushed and I had chills and cold sweats. I locked myself in the bathroom and lay down naked on the cool tile, moaning and cursing my fate.

when i think of my mom
and i feel angry
because she never explained menstruation
to me
i remember her mother died
when she was three.

when i think of my mom
and i feel angry
because she didn't explain to me
about vulva, hymen or clitoris
i remember
she was raised in a private school. . . .

when i think of my mom
and i feel angry
because she didn't tell me
about pregnancy
i remember the lovely yellow dresses
and beautiful formals
she sewed for my sis and me.

when i think of my mom
and i feel angry
cause she acted ashamed of her body,
i remember no one told her
to be proud of it.

A man is a man
but a woman is more than you think.

When I was a high school junior I pleased my father greatly, not by getting straight A's or becoming the football queen, but by breaking the girls' record in the mile run. I remember that day well, as I was very sick with menstrual cramps afterwards--I guess I was trying to be the son he never had; ignoring my female body, gushing blood, betraying me.

She was a girl. And she knew how to be one, too. It was Candy who made me start wearing a bra and shaving my legs and setting my hair and sewing a dress. I don't do any of these things now.

What good are they? But you have to wear a bra! You have to shave your legs. You have to do everything to be a lady. You can't be a tomboy all your life. And when are you gonna start wearing something besides jeans and a t-shirt? NEVER!!!

I wore flannel-lined jeans and a turquoise t-shirt, which eventually formed two bumps on my chest. I was amazed when I noticed them. My mother explained, and I got my first trainer-bra, but the turquoise t-shirt went . . . After the bumps appeared on the front of my turquoise t-shirt, things became more complicated, however. My mother explained sex to me, complete with pictures and diagrams, for the second time. (She claimed that she told me the whole set-up when I was nine, but I must have forgotten it all.) This time it took.

Bras were the wanted commodity, despite the lack of need. Mindy Frazee was the owner of about six, and every morning she would proceed to the bathroom with her little brown bag. We would all put one on, despite the fit, and go off to morning recess for the world to notice. We returned to the bathroom before school was out to give them back to their owner and the little brown bag. Our teacher, Mr. Reardon, warned us that there was no rush and we should leave the boys alone. We just giggled.

Bob's Valentine party. The social event of sixth grade. Everyone who was "lucky" was going. Boys asked girls, and the uninvited felt the first pangs of a dateless Saturday night. I was lucky, and thrilled. At the party parents were supervising kissing games. ("Aren't they cute?") Later these parents wondered why their children were in such a hurry to grow up.

I fell in love with Helen's fourteen-year-old neighbor, Mike, during a game of Red Rover in the middle of their street. We went steady, but Alice made me return the Saint Christopher he gave me (the sign of going steady then). He bought me another necklace. We spent time kissing in his back yard. Our love lasted through July and August; then I broke up with him. My diary entry of August 23, 1963 reads: "Mike called. He said, 'can we see each other? I haven't slept or eaten,' and all that rot. I hate him."

When I was thirteen, wearing a bra was something that gave one status. All the other girls in my class wore bras, with the exception of myself and two other girls. My mother never once mentioned the possibility of buying one for me, and I wondered if I was to go through life without one. The game the girls played to see if another girl was wearing a bra was to go up behind her and feel for the elastic part in the back and snap it. If she wasn't wearing one, the girls would make some wry comment like, "Oh, you're not wearing a bra yet." I usually kept on my sweater and kept my back against a wall. I finally asked my mother if she would buy me a bra. She said, "Why, because your friend Marie wears one?" She said it sarcastically, and I shot back defensively, "No, because I need one." I could have gone on for another six months or so without one, but emotionally I couldn't go another day.

One morning skate-boarding to school, I passed a big silver Mercedes Benz. The slender hood ornament with its encircled peace sign blinked at me and I stopped. I took a tunnel-sweep view of Washington Street, then walked over and twisted off the ornament. I got a rush of joy as I slid it into the pocket of my navy block sweater, then I remounted my skateboard and hurtled myself towards the chapel at school.

I was getting older. A gap was developing between my life at home and life with my peer group. With my peers I acted--tried to act--the part of a sophisticated and daring (but chicken) surfer girl. At home I was young, still running to mama, still protected little sister, still shining big brother's shoes.

I was never a child. I was a horse. On Mondays I was a palomino racehorse, on Tuesdays a five-gaited bay, on Wednesdays a pinto cowpony. I cantered to school. I wore a small chain necklace that I stuck in my mouth and chomped like a bit. On my seventh Christmas I was given a horse and my fantasies became reality. I didn't have to be a horse, I owned one, and I devoted myself to him.

My boyfriends were few and far between--who would want to compete for my attention with a horse? Almost always the horse won. So I became subject to prodding, teasing, and name-calling. "Horses, horses, horses, you never stopped playing horses . . . How come you ride so much--is it so there's something between your legs all the time? . . . You know horses are a girl's sexual hang-up--come down. . . ." My horses were a form of escape . . . I enjoyed riding but I never experienced an orgasm, not even a tingle. But my face would always turn bright red as I turned away.

The first time I masturbated, I had no idea what I was doing, but I knew it felt good. I placed a pencil under boiling hot water, then began running it up my thighs, around my tingling genitals, and when I knew myself to be ready (this was in seventh grade), put it inside myself, softly twirling. The most incredible sensation came when I slowly pulled the pencil out.

Several months later I was in my father's library, reading his child psychology books, when I came across the term "masturbate." The word itself sounded ugly, and the definition was horrid to me. It said I was going to get huge pimples and hairs on my chin for caressing myself. I felt fear and shame after reading that passage, and it stifled any desire to explore the sexual parts of my body.

Get my rocks off? Play with myself? Diddling? My joy button?

No, that's not quite exactly what I want to call it. It's more like touching a cat's fat nose. More like the energy I feel when I can really catch a glimpse of all the possibilities in the world and universe.

I must've been no older than six when I started, though I can't recall the initial experience. I do remember the doll I used to pretend love to--she was a little more than half my size. After kissing her passionately on the lips I'd roll over on my back and do something I didn't know much about except that it felt good.

Something else that sent me off alone and behind locked doors was dressing in the various stores of old gowns and scarves we played with--I constantly anticipated the day when I would have matured enough to be able to juggle my large breasts up and down in my hands.

As I grew to know the wants of my own body, I learned to recognize immediately external objects which might enhance my impersonal pleasure. My parents had a vibrator that fit the back of the hand. I discovered running water from the faucet in the bathtub. My mother must've wondered why I washed my hair and ran the water so much. Then, I happened upon the most unlikely instrument of all: the vacuum cleaner. What marvelous sensations--it must be close to the way a man feels when he makes love to a woman, I was to think later.

At about the age of eight or nine, or maybe ten, I began to worry because I could remember when my I-didn't-know-what-to-call-it-then clitoris was small enough to be stimulated with the mere tip of the index finger of my right hand. It was (it seemed) growing larger by the day. What if I turned into a boy? For I truly believed it would just keep on growing. I began to fantasize about what it would feel like to have something that large and sensitive outside my body. I'd probably "masturbate" ten times a day rather than the consistent one time I now practiced--just before I went to sleep at night. I even had a dream that I grew a penis but still had a "hole." The only trouble was that my penis was above my hole, so it couldn't possibly give me any pleasure.

Junior high school bred more problems that I found hard to cope with. All the girls had boys on their minds and I still wanted to play dolls and hold hands and hug my girlfriends. But my friends were so different now. There was a tense reaction when girls remained so close after twelve or thirteen. I began to feel as though it was some evil taboo to have a girlfriend you really loved. The words "queer" and "lesbian" echoed from some far away and nebulous adult world.

I felt that my girlfriends weren't really capable of caring about me or giving the affection I wanted from a best girlfriend. They didn't realize that all I wanted was a close friendship and not something wrong or dirty.

I've always loved Laurel very much. As I grow older I've tried to understand how we have been able to remain such good friends for so long. Usually girls, when they are young, have close friends which they tend to lose as they grow up. My relationship with Laurel has changed, but we have never stopped being friends.

My favorite high school teacher was Mrs. Price. Only a select few at our school got to be really close to her, but we all loved and respected her greatly. We often ate dinner at her house and talked about our class work over glasses of wine. She had a way of making us feel trusted, mature, and responsible. Interesting people were always at her house, sometimes her family's friends from back east, or some traveling poet or writer.

School was an unpleasant distraction until the eleventh grade. My English teacher then was a warm, open young woman. Here was encouragement for the poems I'd been hiding. She was interested in me and wanted to read more of my poems. I wrote more just so I could continue my relationship with her. She became a friend and a source of encouragement that I badly needed.

As I approached adolescence, I began to feel "out of it" for listening to folk or classical music, rather than rock 'n roll, and for reading books instead of watching T.V. My teenage diaries were full of self-castigation for my failure to "get with it." I would make little progress reports--"I think I like rock and roll a little more now," and "I'm trying not to talk so much in class." I had become convinced that the reason I wasn't having any dates was that my brains scared boys away. I noticed that the most popular girls were those who knew how to flirt and dress, who could be entertaining in a kind of light, intriguing way, who made boys feel important, clever, powerful. Smart girls could be popular too--especially if they were pretty--but they had to be discreet about their intelligence. As captain of the debating team and president of the honor society, I already felt like a failure. I continued to achieve in spite of myself. I often wonder how much more I might have grown, done, accomplished, if I hadn't been fighting myself all the way; if I had been a boy, perhaps, instead of a girl.

I never said anything in school. Ever.

I attended a Catholic high school for girls, which was excellent scholastically but draining emotionally. We had to follow strict rules that I am convinced made me even more neurotic. To survive, I had to develop a sense of humor.

High school wasn't all I had expected. The captain of the football team didn't run up and ask me for a date, the drill team didn't seek me out, I was never made prom queen, and I was never elected the most beautiful girl on campus.

High school began. It was Dotty and me against the world. A new world was opening up to me, and I had a friend to walk through the gates with. Dotty and I were unified, except when one of us had a date.

I held big parties when my parents left for the weekend. I bought huge amounts of fruit and made gigantic fruit salads. I made hash brownies too. Then I invited all the "hip" kids I hated, because they were the only friends I had. Everyone got stoned and dug me for it, while I ran around cleaning up after everyone and making sure everyone was having a good time.

There were twenty-six of us debutantes crowded into the women's locker room at the Los Altos Hills Country Club. All nervous, slipping on floor-length petticoats, long three-button silk gloves, and decollete white ballgowns. I was the last to bow because I was the tallest. The last to come out onto the floodlit, gazeboed stage to a roomful of clapping, quasi-drunk, professional parents. Shaking on the sacrificial altar, I gave my knee-deep curtsy, took my father's arm down the stairs, and began to dance.

After three years of painfully trying to adapt myself to the California Teenager Image, which was as far removed from my real self as China from New York, I decided to drop the whole thing and to hell with what anyone thought. I quit wearing make-up and bras and got a pair of cowboy boots. Girls stared in the locker room at my braless body and my cowboy boots, but I didn't care.

Often I breathe for days on other people's air. I dream I am on a swing and that I've forgotten how to pump, so I must sit unmoving and wait until someone, anyone, comes over and gives me a push.

My life is vacant of sleep. The old fantasy I used to cling to for release has been replaced by a demon. A woman in black, her face contorted, lurks in my nighttime wandering. She stands there laughing--her face assuming a hideous grin. I can see down her throat--into long dark corridors, her throat is black--she laughs--no white teeth, no pink throat, no pale tonsils--only black and laughter and her face and me. She is the witch of my childhood nightmares come back to haunt me. The witch that lived in the mousehole in the corner of my room, the little black witch. The woman in black--laughing--echoes of past fears relived in today's sleep. I cannot escape. I cannot sleep--she is there.

Thoughts of casually
opening my wrists
easy way out

I told him I was having trouble sleeping--he gave me sleeping pills--I told him I was a little edgy--he gave me tranquilizers. He told me it was common, not to worry, and to be sure and come back if symptoms persisted. I left the hospital with two bottles of pills and a headache. I took two pills that night. They helped me fall asleep, but the woman was there. I could not wake myself up. In the morning I put the two bottles of pills underneath my shirts, socks, and jeans--and closed the drawer.

I painted my black eye
and wiped my bitten lips
to go to several drug stores
(carefully, cleverly) for my pills,
and hiding the bottles in the garbage can,
hoped that if I wanted it to,
the phone would work,
because sometimes it didn't
like everything else.
I swallowed perhaps a handful,
aspirin and sleeping pills,
till I was tired
and flushed the rest
down the toilet.

I wanted to be dead--
not to die, but
you have to go through that;
yet to do it so I could

change my mind.

Not knowing if I had allowed
enough of a chance,
that was the chance I took.

I was locked in a little white room
where the fire engines kept coming
under the high window,
and when the doctor peeked in
   I pointed at the hole
   between
      my legs.

I was fifteen years old when I lost my virginity. No. I think this makes more sense: I was no longer a virgin at fifteen. I used to think I had lost my virginity, which of course meant that I must *find* the damn thing.

I was terribly naive, and so was my first lover. Both of us thought we had invented a new, entirely revolutionary way to *almost* "do it"--we used the "technique" I later discovered was the oldest one around, *coitus interruptus*, and not a very good one at that, as far as gaining sexual satisfaction and not making babies.

It was not painful, I did not bleed, and I didn't even know I was devirginized (new word) till I read all about *coitus interruptus* in an old sex book I had stashed away. I called Gregg (my boyfriend) up right away and told him we had "gone all the way" (he was a virgin until I came along, so we were both equally naive), and that I could in fact be pregnant that very minute, and that if I wasn't carrying his baby I never wanted to see him again unless we only held hands, and that if I was pregnant I wanted to drive off a cliff with him along.

I never got pregnant and we never stopped making love until he went away three years later. Every month we both cringed--if my period was one day late I'd stay home from school with a hot water bottle between my legs. It was hell. And I'm sure I wasn't the only kid in high school living that hell.

My child won't go through that hell.

I learned one thing from my sex education class in junior high school that I hadn't known before. I learned that vaginal discharge was the symptom in women of having V.D. Since I was about twelve I'd had some discharges but had been horribly ashamed and embarrassed about them, for I'd never heard them mentioned in any of the standard Birds and Bees discussions I got at home, or even among my friends. I felt I was a freak, and never told a soul my puzzling secret. Then in eighth grade I found out what was wrong with me--I had V.D. Since I'd never had sex, I thought it must be something that had just spontaneously grown inside of me--I didn't blame anyone else for my problem; I felt I was the guilty one for just having such a disease.

We saw films in sex education about the effects of undetected gonorrhea and syphilis--the blindness, insanity, and death--but in spite of knowing what the consequences were, I couldn't bring myself to tell a doctor that I had V.D. I think I felt I deserved the punishment, whatever it turned out to be. A friend happened to mention that V.D. could even be passed by kissing, and in a panic I broke up with my boyfriend. I think now my V.D. scare had a lot to do with my remaining a virgin for as long as I did. It wasn't until high school that I came upon an article in a women's magazine about normal vaginal discharges. It was the first time since I was twelve years old that I could see my genitals as something normal instead of freakish and dirty. It was as big a liberation as anything else that has happened since.

Because we had to observe the lockout rule at midnight, I discovered what fun kissing and hugging at the doorstep could be. Ah, college was really a gas! My grades were great, too. However, I was not too bright when it came to matters of sex. My new roommate and other friends in the dorm had boyfriends whom they slept with. When they would make jokes about sex, I'd laugh even though I did not know what they were talking about. At nineteen I did not know what a "hard on" was. During one feverish encounter, I thought that the guy's belt buckle was jabbing me.

He knew that I was a virgin, but that didn't matter to him. He laughed at me when I said that he was not being a gentleman. Despite cries, protests, and stabs at his integrity, it took him about three minutes to accomplish the rape. I was amazed at the nothingness.

I retained my virginity not because I particularly cared about its loss, but because I didn't want to be initiated into the mysteries of sex by a fumbling boy hardly more experienced than I.

When he walked in the door looking like a hung dog and told me we had V.D., I was pissed. Pissed at his lies, at getting it from his old girlfriend whom he said he had not seen, at my stupid self. I felt infected, though there was no physical discomfort. I finally got the name and address of a clinic, and I fled there from school.

The clinic put gonorrhea back in perspective, for each of the twenty-five people (mostly men) in the waiting room thought they had V.D. The doctors were cool and told me to take my medication, not to drink any alcohol, not to eat spicy foods, and not to have sexual relations for at least two weeks. That was fine with me--I was celibate for a couple of months.

White knight shine
came to me once
on fumbled thumbs
he twittled his lies
like kites in my sky
I asked no questions
eager little girl
I ate him whole
Lord, he gave me
indigestion.

It sickens me to think of all the women who have been terrified by their first (and even subsequent) sexual encounters because they submitted to something they didn't feel ready for. How many of us submitted not because we wanted to, but because we thought it was the only way to hold on to a man. . . .

Soon after I became involved with Larry, the issue of my virginity became a frequent topic of discussion. I had clung to that exaggerated membrane up until this time, but my arguments were growing weaker by the minute. Somewhere inside me, though, I could still hear my mother telling me that no man would respect a woman after he had stolen her virtue (i.e., virginity). And worse than this was the fact that no man would want to marry a woman who wasn't a virgin. If she had deceived him, immediate annulment of the marriage was inevitable. So I was wary of taking this radical leap, but I couldn't hang on much longer. I was scared. It seemed like I was watching a movie as it happened. Once again, I went through the motions that I thought were expected. When it was over I felt disappointed. Where was the mystery?

Mother said nightly, don't get pregnant, don't get touched until marriage, men's bodies hunger, she didn't know I would be hungry too and I was, so I realized that her fears were hers. She gives me cramps with her delusions.

Then business classes, all girls. Conversation centered around the diamond rings that were arriving in the mail from Viet Nam, who had or had not gotten a letter from her overseas letter-love, and what was happening on Friday night. I knew that ten of the twenty-five girls in my shorthand class had been pregnant, had abortions or had babies, in the last year. Those were only the ones I knew about. Pregnancy was never discussed; neither was birth control. Sex education consisted of a movie on menstruation and the failure of 7-Up douches in preventing pregnancy.

The wooden trains and chalk boards of the outer office were heaped into a corner. Three babies sat not far from them, ripping up medical magazines and slobbering on the torn pages. We watched. We were couched waiting women joined together by a cycle of fertility. The pregnant ones sent slight smiles to the toddlers each time they moved, asking those soft but high-pitched silly questions that must irritate little children. Seated closer were the real mothers, the tired but unrelaxed women, who sporadically did their job of disciplining against pulled hair and tempers. I sat observing with no clear expectations. I felt loyal to my selfishness, but realized that I would surely someday, like them, be generous. When they called my name, I stood alone, glad because I didn't have to bend and pick up another.

I read wall charts and numbered the pieces of yellow linoleum on the floor. I looked out the window at the parked cars, then I sat down on a short silvery stool in case the nurse or doctor should appear and question my nervousness. The doctor didn't shut the door or sit down near me, he just stood with a pen and a chart, and nodded irregularly while I mumbled about everything's remaining confidential.

A pap smear and a prescription later, I was changing lanes heading north. Our home town pharmacist would either have asked me whom the pills were for or asked my mother if my periods were better regulated. The Santa Rosa drug store was huge and ugly. The people were all strangers, which made it a little easier. I tried to appear hurried and annoyed, as if I was married and my children were waiting to be fed.

I know of the dangers of birth control pills, and yet I know they are the most foolproof contraceptive. I absolutely hate taking the pill--I feel I am killing myself slowly. Yet in a way I am addicted.

The doctor said I was pregnant. "Impossible," I said. "No," he said.

Planned Parenthood was a businesslike place with doctors wearing Population Z buttons on their white smocks. They wanted my name, rank, serial number, and money right away. When the doctor learned that I did not take the pill, she automatically assumed that I was pregnant. A quickie exam proved her to be right. With searing, brutal frankness she asked, "You will get an abortion, won't you?" I had never thought of it. It seemed so barbaric--an easy out for everyone. They whisked me off to a counselor who was most compassionate and understanding. She quoted statistics to me, so I wouldn't feel like a criminal, knowing many others had abortions, too. She also advised me not to tell my parents because they would probably commit suicide together. I had to carry the secret alone. Three weeks of lying to my folks about where I was going, waiting at the Welfare Department for medical aid to pay for the abortion, trying to see doctors, and sneaking around evading questions from friends turned me into a Rolaid's case!

I saw that small cold room with the electric heater going next to a squared-off hard metal table. Then I saw the stirrups. I thought that the doctor couldn't possibly make me put my legs in those things. A heavy wave of nausea overcame me, but I knew this was the only way out. It was like a punishment I had to endure to pay for my crime. So when he shaved my pubic hair and tied my knees into the stirrups, I felt as if I were facing the electric chair--only I would have preferred the electric chair at that point; it would have been less humiliating. It all felt so strange; it was much closer to my stomach than I'd imagined. I kept passing out, but I looked up in time to catch a glimpse of that little man walking out of the room hunched over sheets and newspapers filled with the bloody remains of the fetus.

It became obvious that my interest in the opposite sex was merely a reflection of my desire for social acceptance. I was not interested in friendship that boys could offer, but in the status that they could bring me. I was attracted to males because I was supposed to be attracted to them. The primary factors that made a male desirable were appearance, age (the older, the better), and popularity (the more popular, the more desirable). In other words, I sought men that would make other women jealous.

Anais Nin says that women have had a tendency "not to merge but to submerge their personalities in those of their men." Often men encourage this--even demand it--and that makes it all the easier to curl up and fall asleep in them. It is like falling asleep in snow, so easy and so deadly, so deceptively temporary, and so final. There was a period of time in my early twenties when I felt that I literally couldn't live without a man. Rather than take the chance of finding out, however, I made sure never to break up with one before a replacement was fairly well assured. I remembered the awkward loneliness of my early adolescence, and it seemed to me that all of my confidence, poise, achievements, delights, had originated with my first boyfriend and would only continue so long as I had a man.

I never spent much time with the same person because I found that I was constantly comparing my dates to my father and none of them was good enough. Once I felt certain that a guy was hung up on me, I lost interest. In fact, he usually became quite distasteful to me.

breasts
I have two breasts
that hang like water balloons
that are held in a 36 double D hammock
and flop when I run

they are not beautiful
not the firm
brown-nippled type
but are round and veiny and pale
and sag

there are men who think them playthings
who punch and bite and bump
and stare
who rape me naked
when I walk through
restaurants
and supermarkets
and crowds
and stores
who follow me in cars
who nudge their friends. . . .

I become
for these men
a giant walking tit
on parade
for the pleasure of all.

He, who told me just a few weeks before that he loved me more than a thousand cream cheese and olive sandwiches, could now tell me, with tears in his eyes, that it was over.

Orgasm has actually become a burden to me. According to most men I have gone to bed with, I don't do it right. That is, I don't often have "vaginal" orgasms. I feel often that I am seen as a little orgasm machine and not as a person.

my vagina opens
like a jar of honey
to my fingers . . .

Entering the apartment that night, cold and tired, I wondered if he were home. Then I saw a dark familiar form lying on the couch, fast asleep. I lit a candle instead of a light, afraid of awakening him. The large reclining chair invited me and I surrendered, letting it swallow me. I rested while reflecting upon his face--so peaceful and serene he appeared; completely vulnerable. His skin was smooth and tight, his hair coal, a violent halo, frizz-aura.

Once awake he would call together his colleagues and get to work. His cause was his life and the lives of his brothers. I valued his love then and now, but the world says this man is violent, coarse and unyielding. I know, watching him in precious moments that he is none of these; he has tenderness, but not for those who persecute him. None can know this unless they have seen his sleep.

One lover and I were discussing whether or not to live together. He said, "I just don't know if I am ready to accept the responsibility of running your house and family." Who does he think has been running it without him? What makes him think we need a manager or a dictator?

I am trying to learn how to keep centered while living and sharing my life with a man. It's not easy, and often I find myself falling back into the old, familiar patterns, even though they have proven dead ends in the past.

I am most afraid of being alone--and lonely--being deserted by friends and lovers--betrayed. What's worse is not merely the aloneness, but the fear of not liking or being able to accept what is me. That is what drives me so compulsively, that fear that when I am alone--maybe there will be nothing there--nothing--not even something to hate--nothing--absolute emptiness and nothingness. It is almost a nightmare--afraid that someday I will look in the mirror and there will be merely a reflection of the furniture and the surrounding environment--I will no longer be there--dissolved into emptiness.

At nineteen years old I felt that I was a nonentity, a timid mouse with a plain face paradoxically attached to a lovely body. The body was modestly covered with clothes while the plain face was brazenly naked! There was little satisfaction that I was a growing physiologist, a budding artist, and a fine dancer. None of that sort of thing matters when you're under twenty and have no small talk.

Three weeks later we were married at a big wedding and I wore Mom's dress and Grandma's choker and the rings were beautifully done and somehow we haven't quite lived happily ever after.

I never guessed as my family lovingly coached me to be a "good" wife, that I helped them sentence me, word by word, into the next prison. Mother, Grandmother, Aunt and Uncle became a Greek chorus.

Mother: It's up to the woman; it's she who makes or breaks the marriage. Whatever your husband tells you, you must do.

The men may rave and rant, let them, because in the end, if you know how ("But how?") you will have your way.

All men stray a bit, but they never fail to come back to their wives.

Don't be *too* thrifty, lest he come to expect it.

Grandmother: You don't like rhubarb? If your husband likes it you'll serve it. (I don't.)

You'll be more careful with your husband's money than you are with your father's.

Don't ever let your husband see you scrub the floor. Heavy work must be done when he is out of the house.

The first thing a man looks at is a woman's feet, then her hair. Yours must always be tidy.

Never refuse your husband in bed. You must be a skillful lover. (Twenty years after my grandmother's death, my husband still expresses his thankfulness to her.)

(The unspoken message) You are obliged to enjoy yourself in bed. (Obliged? Grandma go away!)

Aunt: Black lace against a creamy skin is beautiful, especially when there's a man to see it.

Bubble baths are fun too, especially when there's a man around.

The feminine hygiene is very important.

All together: Whatever your husband says, you must do.

The Silent Sermon: Be clean, obedient, and sexy.

In our beginning years together my chief delight was to bask in his glory and to be his beloved child-bride. It was a charming picture. But a child mother is something else again. The honeymoon cottage gave way to the nursery. Husband found the children a bother and wife was tired. But a mystique persisted. He was so happy to see me, each time, with a belly full of child. He told me I was beautiful. But then, when each baby arrived, the new father's face went slack with the shocked realization of another intruder in his home.

The following dialgoue is from a woman's journal--the argument is, of course, with herself.

> I feel empty--as if there were a huge cavity in the middle of my belly, aching to be filled. I eat, but it is not filled. I drink, but it is not filled. I lie beside my man at night and feel his warmth on my belly; he enters me but does not fill me. I am empty of life. I crave a child to fill the emptiness.

Oh, come off it--stop being so melodramatic! You're imagining this emptiness. You can't really feel it. It's something you were taught to feel. It's just in your head and you can get rid of it.

> But I don't want to. You want to, but I don't.

I want to because it would be insane for you to have a child. I'm afraid you'll feel the emptiness so strongly that you'll throw all caution away--throw me away--and fill it.

> But I need to care for someone, to nurture someone. I have more than enough to give a man. And I want to know how it feels to carry a child within me and to give it life and care for it; to feel its little form--my very own, nourished by my milk.

That's a very romantic image, but there's more to babies than that. What about the dirty diapers, crying in the middle of the night, taking care of the child until he's grown--with no assurance of a man to share the burden with you?

> No woman is really assured of that anymore. And I want to experience that part of it too--the day-to-day responsibility for another human being who really needs me.

You want a relationship that won't dissolve like relationships with men always do. You want someone you can depend on to depend on you. But you know that's a false hope and a foolish one. Your child will certainly grow and leave you. Of all the people in the world in whom you may invest love and energy, your child is the one who is the most certain to leave you. And then where will you be? More desolate, alone, and lost than you are now.

> No--I think it will make me more real--and make my life more whole. I feel so flighty, trivial, unproven this way.

You're using the idea of a baby as an escape from confronting your own life--what to do with it. You think a child would give you a purpose for living, one you haven't found yet, but you're wrong. You'll still have to deal with that problem after the child is born. And even if it were true, it would be the wrong reason to have babies. You can't and shouldn't try to live through your children. You have to want them for themselves before I'll let you have any.

I gave birth to a son in 1961 and to this day I look back on the experience with complete repugnance and contempt. The delivery room is an assembly line definitely designed for the doctor, not the patient. My arms were tied down. My legs were put into stirrups to keep them high and apart. I remember the doctor saying to a male bystander, "Look at those long legs." I had the maddest urge to kick him in the mouth with one of those long legs. I do not know how helpful this position was to the doctor, but I know I felt vulnerable and, even at a time like that, embarrassed to be in such a ridiculous position.

By this time, I was having what are called bearing-down pains. Being tied to that table took me out of my own control and put me into theirs. The pain was the only thing left to me since I was not performing a controlled function, just helplessly lying there. I was on the stage with all the hot lights on me, yet it was their show. They delivered the baby, not I. The procedure was frightening and painful. I was robbed of an experience that could have been shared with my husband as our accomplishment.

Many women remark that birth pains are bad but that you forget them with the joy of the child. I have not forgotten and have nightmarish memories of the degradation I felt during those hours of delivery.

Once it's over it's over, and you feel good even though you still ache between your legs. And you have something to show for nine months of discomfort and a few hours of pain. I loved giving birth.

Being cooped up in the house all day with no one but a three-year-old to talk to could make a basket case out of the most intelligent woman in no time, unless she has developed some inner resources to keep herself alive and growing along with her child.

Does motherhood release rage and cruelty in anyone except me and "sick" child batterers? Or maybe I am "sick." I mean, I am supposedly mature, gentle, normal, happy, loving, intelligent. In spite of those qualities, my children, when they were about a year old, released in me terrifying fantasies of torture and cruelty. They did it by being children, with normal childish traits of persistence, nagging, crying, curiosity.

Fantasy films unwind in my brain when I am helplessly grinding my teeth with rage. In my fantasies I most often seize a child by the heels, swing it around, and smash its head into the wall, watching the blood and brains flow down the wall. Sometimes I tie them to their beds as they scream, or I leave them alone in the house and just run away. Sometimes in my fantasies I beat them, pound them, beat them. After the fantasy films run out I look at my babies and realize I could never do those things. I think of how awful the consequences would be. I love my children too much. Then I am able to be tender and gentle with them once again.

But I really have, in anger (not rage: that makes me turn inward or destroy things, not children) kicked at their legs, spanked, pulled hair, and pushed them to the floor, hard. I am not a very gentle mother, am I? All those things are cruel enough. I understand how the battered children become that way; my self-control switch merely comes on at a lower level than that of the child beaters.

I am ashamed to admit I have such awful fantasies and really have hit and kicked my little children. Maybe admitting it, though, helps me to accept myself. I spend so much time in self-hate.

I used to sit on the floor, because Elizabeth would fuss when everybody sat on chairs and she couldn't reach them. I gave up lying on the floor because she, the baby, would fling herself upon me and hurt me most painfully.

Right now the television is on; I hate, loathe, and despise all children's programs (except Electric Company, which I can just tolerate). But since I hate, loathe, and despise arguments even more . . . the TV is on.

. . . When I get up in the morning the house is full of voices
when I do not want to hear voices and answer questions, when I
want only my own silence. . . .

Damnable supermarket on a Saturday morning

fatigue and weariness of the week embodied in carts crashing,
bashing into each other
smell of meat, of eggs, of onions, more protein for my children
more iron for my strength   which one, which one, blinded by
tears
of helplessness and boredom   trying to choose a simple package
of raisins

Smelly foreigners argue and yell in front of the cans of beans,
and i'm ashamed of myself for having that contempt and because
i can't
understand,   it's just a voice, a push, it looks like they
should be speaking
Spanish (my God, must all dark people be Latins?) but it's
strange like Lithuanian
or Egyptian (Do people speak Egyptian?)   and all the spectacles
of pity;
a woman leads her faltering husband past the eggs, softly past
the cheese, never a word
no contempt. I hate them all. I hate their family life and their
kitchens, i hate
my family life and my kitchen, i hate the food and that i have
to choose it and
cook it and serve it and i can't choose   the hysteria-boredom-
hatred-anger of my
life makes me indecisive, unable to choose a simple can of
pineapple.

retarded children, cross-eyed in the aisles with mothers who are
calm and patient,
old people consult in Swedish about lettuce and potatoes
the man with 15 bags of white bread in his shopping cart   he
doesn't
worry about protein-vitamin-rip-off, bleached preserved flour, or
the prisons
or the war or detergent   shall i pollute, shan't i pollute, are
paper towels
really necessary? Large questions loom by small jars of peanut
butter and small
questions   which kind, which kind, what we'll eat on Wednesday,
lurch along
beside the big problems i can't control because i can't control my

own tears, tear-
ing past packages of seeds (what's wrong with me, why don't I have a garden?)
past bottles of wine (why shouldn't I drink?)   sort, sort the items   food, non-
food, imported, will you cash a check, yes i have food stamps the checker has
had a busy day and so have i   i've only been up for two hours but it seems
like 7,000   the laundromat, the car, the damp clothes, the street, the streets,
the cars like carts just missing   just barely missing.

When I am by myself, I am nothing. I only know that I exist because I am needed by someone who is real, my husband, my children. My husband goes out into the real world. Other people recognize him as real, and take him into account. He affects other people and events. He does things and changes things. I stay in my imaginary world in this house, doing jobs that I largely invent, and that no one cares about but myself. I do not change things. What I cook disappears, what I clean one day must be cleaned again the next. I seem to be involved in some sort of mysterious process rather than actions that have results.

"You shouldn't be so
Angry all the time,"
He says to me,
And with that I am dismissed
Labelled
   Hysterical
   Mal-adjusted creature
   Sick chick
"Over-reaction detracts from your message"
My message?
I'm supposed to
   Quietly
   Politely
   Gently
   Passively
Ask him to get his foot off my neck
"Do you know what anger does to your
   blood pressure, your viscera?"
And where was he with his measurements of
   my bust when I was a
   dish-rubbing
   floor-scrubbing
   meal-planning
   clothes-pressing

lunch-fixing
husband-fucking
Robot!
Angry?
I feel angry
But I feel--
And if I die
From a blood vessel
Popping
In my head
At least I will not have already been dead
30 years.

We humans are complicated, and the avoiding father was also the caring husband, and during those back-breaking years, whenever I showed a flicker of interest that might enhance my being, whether it was a course, or a school or a degree, his response was always the same: "Do it!" "We'll manage." "Never mind about the house." "The children will be better off." And so I did it; we managed; I tried not to mind about the house. I don't know whether the children were better off. To our friends I seemed to manage family, home, and prospects of a job with fine aplomb. Alone and exhausted, I wept into the dishes in the sink, in the bath tub, and whenever no one was looking. I felt, "He's pushing." "He only wants my salary." "I'm tired." "The children are being neglected."

Maybe I've fallen part way into my looking glass because I am looking--more than ever before--into myself. I can't say I like what I see (but neither did Alice all the time)--a puzzled, confused, searching woman who's not sure where she wants to go or with whom. There's Michael, there's school, there's a job, there's travel, there's the country-farm, there's money, material wants . . . I could go on and on and on . . . so what's next? Selective choice, multiple choice, trial and error, grab bag, surprise package. I don't know.

What I have just realized is that still, in the back of my mind, there is an image of permanent happiness--and a sense of my own failure at not having achieved it yet. I feel as if I am expected to be happy--by my parents, by the world at large, and that if I am not perfectly and completely happy every moment of every day, it is my own fault, my own shortcoming--embarrassing, shameful even. So I often pretend to be happy when I'm not. The image of permanent happiness is not perfectly focused, but it is, by definition, stable. It includes a man and children and a profession, creative pursuits--all in perfect balance and harmony. This, I know, is not a realistic projection, nor is it necessarily what would really make me happy. Actually, I don't believe in a permanent condition of happiness, but only in moments of joy and moments of despair punctuating periods of relative contentment or discontent--a mixture of ups and downs.

The "room of one's own" is not just a physical space in the house where I can close the door and be alone; it is psychic space as well--the ability to shut out the distractions of relationships, roles, and duties, and be alone with myself.

I'm "only" the secretary, but the office would fold without me.

She was working as a waitress at one of the large chain corporation's locals. It was not a bad place, but it certainly was not a very good place either. She hated the games she had to play with the different customers in order to make the money to pay her bills. Subservient games which allowed her no voice of her own. She was an attentive ear to the drunk coffee drinker's sorrows, a slave to the hurried business man's needs, a friendly smile to the most obnoxious people (the kind who find fault as a living), and a superficial whore to those who get hard-ons by pinching asses.

1/2 doz. grave-yard

there are no more bags
or ties
I need boxes to pack my rolls
don't scold me--
the lady in white
I live permanent press days at night
whited out I blind myself in uniform
too bright to live in the sun
not bright enough to shine at night.
the paycheck comes--
I'm not worth as much as last week.
pastry dreams of whip cream mountains
cookie crumb pathways find gingerbread houses.
do-nuts fill my skies like stars.
sleepily I lay myself down in my apple strudel bed
sweet roll pillow rest my head
bless my soul
help me through another day
night
a summer of bakery madness

still i gain no weight
some people eat their lives away i hear
do blondes still have more fun?
is ultra-bright holding on as no. 1 sex appeal
toothpaste?
I've been away you see
gone
one day i walk out the door to find
new fangled notions
styles change
hair dos
all goes by while I'm inside
my sour dough job.

Since that time I have worked at the Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, been a bartender in Truckee, weighed eggs in Petaluma, and sold Kirby vacuum cleaners. At age twenty-five I enjoy my freedom and independence. I am not as restless as I once was, and I may even settle down by the time I am thirty.

Fifteen years after our most difficult times together, and we're good friends, not living happily after, but on the whole, we're reasonably comfortable with each other. Our lives are separate, and yet we have a kind of closeness. After so many years of common experiences, the bitterness has faded, we touch each other and feel a warmth and caring for each other. We have a number of unspoken arrangements, unspoken not out of a reluctance to discuss, but because talk is unnecessary. We recognize in each other signs of worry and tension and have learned to use the light touch. My husband says he envies me for my full life of teaching and studying. He is wistful that even in middle age, I am still struggling toward a goal.

Sisterhood is providing the encouragement for growing and venturing that men have not provided, and we are flourishing from each other's nurturance, while men are still, for the most part, isolated from one another, cut off from their feelings and confused by what is happening to their women.

woman
discovering your beauty,
I cannot understand
Why I did not see you before.

I had a short-lived but intense relationship with a woman then. Through discovering the beauty of another woman, I discovered my own beautiful woman-self. There was a new respect for myself and the importance of my own growth took precedence over all other things in my life.

I was living peacefully with a man when I realized that I wanted/needed to explore relating to women as something more than friends. I left my secure environment and tentatively approached that thing called lesbianism. Weeks later I found myself having dinner in a tiny attic with Lynn. From across the room I felt my body respond to her and said, "I'm scared." She came to me in a movement so smooth we were, without awkwardness, inches apart. I reached out to touch her breast and became at that instant a lesbian woman. Those two acts--Lynn's walking toward me, and my moving to touch her--became my transition from the straight to the gay world. That painful period of learning to accept one's preference for women did not exist for me.

Conversation with my Mother

the telephone rings
it is eleven p.m.
my mother is on the other end of the line.
how are you ? she asks
expecting me to say "fine"
and talk about the weather.
   somewhere, i still believe that families
   should be families; should share
   their lives with one another.
i don't much want to talk about the weather.

hey, mom, i've met someone;
i'm happy again, for the first time in a long
while.

is it . . . a woman, she asks

what can i tell her that will make her
understand
what it means to really love a woman.

   there is so little love in this world
   that a merging, however evanescent
   of any two people's lives
   should be a celebration.

   somewhere, i still believe that families
   should be families; should share
   their lives with one another

and i say yes, i've met a woman.

i've met a very lovely woman;
she does in her life
what i try to do in my poems:
with inner grace and understanding,
she reaches out and touches people's lives.

i wanted to sing out to that stranger, my
mother, a poem:

feel joy for me
feel the fullness of my life
unfolding
as i "open . . . petal by petal myself"

i guess she never heard that line from cummings
must have been a translation of someone else's
poem,
not his   not mine

she only read a one line stanza in bold type
I FUCK WOMEN. I'M QUEER. I'M QUEER.

It's a relief to me when a friend knows I'm gay. I feel that I can be totally out front with them--just be me completely. With straights who don't know I'm gay there's always something then that I feel, like I can only go so far being myself. I was in love with one of my best friends for a long time. To this day she doesn't know and maybe never will.

That's one of many problems with being gay--sometimes you fall in love with people who aren't gay. Jackie is not only obviously straight, she's married. Pretty much brings things to a halt before they begin. Too bad. She's really beautiful and intelligent and mellow--and straight--finis--pity.

I am afraid that when I am an old woman, people will put me in an "old woman" box and treat me like some kind of foreign creature who has never been young, made love, or thought about all the deep and wonderful things of life. I wish I could meet more old people who still live life with savor.

Why didn't anyone ever tell me? It is fun getting older, or at least less painful than musing around in all the sheep dips of youth. I walk along with myself, less desirable and also less vulnerable to girl watchers, and more sure of my step. I chart my own moods and modes, know when I can work well and when I should take some time for myself. I'm no hero, but then I'm not a total loss either. I'm between all the other people's stereotypes about me, just now, free, gaily finding my own shape. I surprise myself sometimes still.

Writing: that shabby baggage I've carried around with me, every time I've moved, arrested, changed; writing: that old suitcase, with a shoe box stuffed with fear in one corner of it, an assortment of synthetic personal errors, some passion that rattles around and won't settle every time I lug the baggage up, writing. It's intuitive, it's a sense that continually moves in front of me down inside me, a fragile mobile that seems to have always hung, a decoration from my heart. The prisms of glass swing and sway differently from moment, to year, to clear waves of my past. Writing is reality. If I trust the word. . . . Writing ribs, ribs, ribs, moving across, parallel bones of print, fingers riveted with braille, the only light I have to offer, the only light I care a lick about whether it blows out or not.

If you saw me on the street you might not recognize me. My hair is its own color--which hasn't happened since before I met you. It is also short, fluffy and free. My body is different, not only in its appearance but in the way it is carried. Inside lotuses bloom. I am filled with the scent and the magnificent petals. Come closer. You can smell them.

* * * * *

APPENDIX

Exercises to Write By

These were some of the exercises which prompted much of the writing in this biography. We're outlining the ones that stood the time-test of at least two semesters. We found that some of the best writing that "nonwriters" do emerged from spontaneous writing, often as a group activity.

1. Begin with "I was born," end with "and here I am now," and write for ten minutes.

2. Write for ten minutes about what you fear most.

3. Remember a specific childhood experience and write about it from the point of view of the child you were then. (Sometimes using childhood photographs works well on this one.)

4. Portraits: select a visual image of a woman--from reproductions of artwork, photographs, magazines, etc.--and write that woman's story, either in the first or third person. (This one works better if students think about their subject for a week or so.)

5. Write a statement addressed to your mother. (Other members of the family can come later, but students should concentrate on one at a time.) A letter or poem form often works well.

6. Write a dialogue between yourself and yourself on a subject of personal conflict.

7. Over a period of time, record your dreams, in however fragmentary and noninterpretive a way. Later you may want to share these with others who have also been listening to their dreams, but just recording them can get your pen going.

8. Tell the story of how you acquired a scar--literal or figurative. (Courtesy of Sherril Jaffe, Scars Make Your Body More Interesting, Black Sparrow, 1973.)

9. Write a good love letter. Or a good hate letter. Or both. And they may be addressed to the same person.

IFUEKO M. EGHAREVBA

Mary Anne Ferguson
Images of Women in Literature

University of Massachusetts, Boston
Spring 1973

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

My name is Ifueko. I was born in the year 1949 in a village in Nigeria called Thirty-four. I do not know the exact month I was born but my mother told me I was born two years after the eclipse in the month when there is usually one week of continuous sunshine during the rainy season. I therefore know that I was born in August.

The village where I was born has no location on the map of Nigeria because it is too small. My parents originally came from another village to settle here; in fact my father and some elderly men of the village were the pioneers of Thirty-four. My father's name is Izeko and my mother's name is Emose.

My parents are not rich, and the little they have, they have to work very hard to get. As a child I used to think my parents were well-to-do because I had enough to eat and my father had a bicycle and my mother had a sewing machine. She was the first woman to buy a sewing machine in the village. She cannot sew, so the machine is always in the box, over the fireplace. She said no thief would suspect a fireplace as a place to put a sewing machine.

My father was a tailor by profession but was forced to give up this trade because he was not making enough. Not that there were no customers, but most of the customers were usually relatives, who expected my father not to take for his services. My father would sew, patch, and sometimes make dresses for their children. A man is regarded as stingy and greedy charging fees to do a service for even a fifth or sixth generation relation. So my father was forced to take up farming and my mother to expand her trade beyond the local market.

At first the farming was very difficult, as my father had never farmed before and the tools were very crude. To use these tools expertly you must have been a farmer for a considerable period. The problem of much-needed help was solved because of the size of the family and the presence of some grown-up relatives staying with us. My family consists of ten people. I have two brothers and five sisters. I am in the sixth position. We all have our duties to do in the farm. . . .

The staple food is "Ema" (mashed yam) made into something like bread dough. On one occasion I was horrified by the enormous amount of Ema prepared by mother, friends, and relatives--so much that somebody on the other side of the table was completely hidden from view. You could not see whom you were dining with until the Ema had been mercilessly attacked from both sides. The people at the table on such occasions usually greet each other with the words, "So you have been eating with me; thank God, I eat to see you." These occasions are very rare, happening, for example, during communal house building and yam festivals. Yam festivals are held by fortunate farmers--that is, when they can harvest over one thousand racks of yam during one harvest.

My village is about six and a half miles from the highway. In order to travel to the city you have to ride a bicycle to the nearest village, Ugo. At Ugo you leave your bicycle and take a lorry. There is usually a relative who will be willing to take care of your property. Lorries come to my village once in seven days. When they do it is like a big ceremony. I can still recollect with what awe I used to regard the driver. He sits at the wheel serious and proud-looking like a priest ministering to a deity. He would shout at the women to hurry, for he was leaving soon. The women would scramble over one another trying to get their baskets in. The driver usually does not leave until after about three hours. He knows he cannot leave, for he would leave without passengers and therefore with no money in his pocket. Yet he repeats this threat every market day, and the women react accordingly.

Market day in my village is usually a big day. It gives the women, the children, and the men something to look forward to. The women put on their cleanest clothes and the children their best appearances. The men having nothing to do sit in the shade talking of their past glories and how the British people had it tough with the Biris during the punitive war of 1897. Sometimes some of them would buy the daily paper that comes to the village once in a while and ask the local teacher to read it to the whole group. And on several occasions one of the men would want to exhibit his knowledge of the A, B, C's and would read the paper to his fellows with the letters upside down!

The women go to the market carrying heavy loads on their heads, and sometimes a child is also carried on their backs, secured with a strong piece of cloth designed for this purpose; two or three children trail behind. Apart from the yearly festival and market days, the days are much the same. The village is always empty because the people go to their farms and some of the children go to school about two miles away.

On the way from school there is usually a fight among the children, and once in a while I would cry home because somebody had called me names or tried to take away my piece of chalk. When I got home I would tell my mother; my mother would offer no sympathy for me. She would say, "Aren't you a lazy good-for-nothing girl, do you want to tell me, your mate took away your chalk from you without your putting up a fight. I hope your hands were not tied." Regardless of what she said I always complained when I got home. On several occasions she threatened to go naked to spite the child who had beaten me. This trick always worked, for the kids would say, "You better not touch her, her mother would go naked for you."

Today is just like any other day for me, except that today my mother is at home. She did not go to the farm. She stays home whenever the work at home is more pressing, especially during the August season, when it is very rare to have continuous sunshine for three days. At this time of the year the sunshine is important to the women of my village. The frantic effort to dry the melon seeds to prevent them from growing and rotting in the basket is seen in their faces. Whenever the sun fails, you see the failure in both the women's and the men's faces. The children just watch and play more quietly, sitting on the dusty floor with their toes going around in circles and looking in the room corners as if looking for the cause of the misfortune.

As today was a very good day for my mother, I knew all was going to be okay. I was a few yards away when she shouted, "Are you back from school? Your food is in the kitchen." But I did not go into the house immediately because of the song she was singing. I waited and listened as she sang. Her bent bare back glistening in the sun, she was in a kneeling position spreading the melon to get as much sun as possible, flies buzzing over and occasionally settling on her back. She looked back and saw me watching. She continued singing:

"Women never go to war
Except Iye Esigie the Queen
Idia the mother of the King."

She looked back and saw me still staring at her. Now she was impatient. "I say go in and eat your food and go to the stream and fetch me water." My mother is not a very stern woman. She loves her children but resents being caught showing her love.

I began to wonder why is it that women never go to war. After all, the women in my village are very strong, daring, and industrious. I have known so many of the women trying to rival their mates by working hard and paying their children's school fees in the high schools. This happens especially in the polygamous families. The men just sit and watch, basking in the early morning sun and talking of their past glories--how their forefathers drove away the white men--while the women were already at their work as early as 4:00 A.M. I also notice that the little boys do nothing other than sweep the front home every morning while the little girls wash dishes, clean houses, fetch water, and go do errands for mother, and yet mother says boys are very strong and women depend on them.

At the age of twelve I was ready to go to the high school, but my father did not approve. He believed only men need education. He said girls' education is a waste of money and time.

At any rate with the help of my mother's brother, my mother was able to put me through the high school. While my mother was thinking of how I might get more of the white man's education, my father was busy looking for an eligible man for me. When I finally announced to my father that I had been admitted to the university, he went to the farm and got drunk to forget his misfortune.

At first my mother was worried about the fees, but she was happy that I was making an effort. Then I told her the government had offered automatic scholarships to female students who get admission to the university.

For days my father still stared at me, and weeks passed before he could think I was okay upstairs. And months passed before he could speak to me without being sarcastic. The first word he said to me was, "I hope you are not making yourself into Iye Esigie the witch Queen mother who went to war."

This reminded me of my mother's song many years back. Now my father had said the Queen mother is a witch because she went to war, but my mother had sung of her with admiration.

Then without asking any more, I knew the path to take.

NANCY BLACK

Betty Eng, Carlagaye Olson
Race, Class, and Sex

California State University, Sacramento
Fall 1973

RECOLLECTIONS AND FRAGMENTS: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SORTS

PART I
Color Me Black

To be. To be born. To be born, not with the proverbial and much envied silver spoon, but with clenched fists, wailing in indignation. Yes, that is a beginning--arms thrust upwards and red monkey face squeezed tightly shut.

(Mother--what words did you whisper in my ear,
if not "resist," if not "defy?")

My parents. Father from a working class background, deserted by his father when he was twenty; a mother who carried dark pocket memories of a Depression childhood.

("Eat everything on your plates! There are starving children in India who would love your scraps." No, not children in India, but one child in Goshen, Indiana, eating beans and dandelion greens.)

Once. When my mother was newly married and still smiling nighttime secrets to herself, a new neighbor asked my father who his pretty black maid was--the one who hung clothes out to dry. Poor father. What a pity his wife looked like a young fiery Negress with a halo of blue-black frizz and a cat's grace.

The last name Black; what irony, what twist of fate?

To grow up being called Blackie, nigger, niggernogger-nigger. To have a beautiful dusky mother, an African queen hidden in the closet too long, till only faint traces remained. What does a child know of irony, of fate? I knew moist pools of sickening fear in my guts. What is this thing, Black?

Eight years old. A deserted school playground in summer. Friends taunting three Negro children--"nigger!" "nigger!" "nigger!" In hatred returned, "Look out, whitey, we're gonna beat you up!" What is this thing, violence, to a sheltered middle class child? What is this thing, Negro children?

(Don't beat me up! Please please my last name is Black, they call me nigger; it's okay, really please please, why should I hurt you? It's okay, really my last name is Black, they call me nigger, don't hit me, don't hit me.")

Still, not knowing "nigger," only fear, only Willa May, our maid, and her seven children. What had we to do with those terrible things, "niggers"?

Once. When I was nineteen years old, Willa May came over to visit my mother after all those years of silence, driving her Cadillac, asking for used clothing. This time I knew the hatred, felt the "nigger" in me rise, and was touched by her contempt for my skin.

Nine years old and weighed down with rage, greying behind my eyes. I am nine years old. My last name is Black. That is my name. It's mine and if somebody calls me names, I cross them off my list. No more shame. (Do you hear me, Willa May?) You're no friend of mine. I lose nothing. Wisdom comes in small doses sometimes, for I discovered something--Black is beautiful. I was never shamed again. I learned anger instead.

unfinished poem:

TO A MAN BENT ON MARRIAGE

. . . you say you have your dreams,
i say i have mine.
. . . you say you will give me your name,
i say what's the matter with mine?

It's my name and no one will ever take it from me. I feel I went through a special initiation rite. I sometimes feel very close to Black pain and rage. In my tainted white pseudo-cultured innocence, I was an unwitting and vulnerable victim of racial bias. I suffered guilt for a last name I had no control over, and for my mother's proud beauty. I was made doubly susceptible because of so little real contact between myself and other minorities, except for hearsay, thus, no real models.

PART II
Down the Class Staircase

By the time I was eighteen, I had moved with my family eight times. We also climbed up and down the social ladder eight times, from lower middle to middle middle, to upper middle, to lower lower, to lower middle, and to lower middle with middle middle pretentions. My parents, once they had a taste of the "Good Life," refused to acknowledge their original roots. My father, talented and influential though he was, lost the mad race up the ladder of success, much to my mother's vocal dismay and chagrin. (After all, what other reason do women get married for except to be able to live better in the future than they did as children--that's part of the cultural expectations.)

We went from living in an antique collector's paradise, next to the Lt. Governor, across from the County Supervisor, to the fringes of a suburban ghetto. My new friends were Chicanos and Blacks from the "wrong side of the tracks." Racial oppression and frustration were high and my confusion nearly disastrous. My parents, in a last ditch effort to regain lost status, both worked to save my father's private business. I, as the oldest, was expected to function as housekeeper and daily babysitter for two small boys and a baby sister. I was fourteen and impressionable. My parents thrust unlearned "lower class" duties on me but demanded adherence to middle class behavior, i.e., "good grades and high morals." All around me was deprivation.

For some unknown reason, I was chosen as the ringleader for my junior high's "elite" group. The "elite" of a more or less slum school is drastically different from a similar group at a wealthy school. Trying to function in both worlds brought me to a nervous breakdown within ten months. My father, in his failure, agony, and growing alcoholism, spent hours describing our oncoming poverty. I heard about the creditors pounding on the doors so often, I dreamed nightly of them. To relieve some of the tension, my parents began to fight, but this time physical violence was introduced--a throwback to their class background. My mother was thrown against walls, kicked in the stomach, and strangled. My father was threatened with knives, gashed by broken glass, and clawed. Yet, while their personal behavior took them back in time to other memories, other fears, they still professed middle class ideals. It destroyed the marriage. My father's personal expectations were demolished, leaving him impotent, and my mother's dreams bitterly crushed. As for myself, while some semblance of financial security returned eventually, I never forgot my fear of financial insecurity. I learned too well to depend on grandma's hand-me-downs. I internalized worrying about misspent pennies. The fear of not having enough money for basic survival devastated later personal relationships. Even now, when confronted with someone "obviously from the lower class," my stomach turns queasy and I can feel myself sink into a nightmare of deliberately forgotten memories; of the smell of near poverty--its taste and its touch. On a socially superficial level, I am middle class; in my gut I am lower class with all its despair and futility. I am obsessed with saving anything from rubber bands to other people's garbage. I haunt thrift stores, not for their campiness, but out of childhood desperation. I fluctuate between spendthrift generosity and sado-masochistic pennypinching. I am a product of my past. I am ashamed, and I am ashamed of my shame. That is my deprivation.

PART III

"I wanted to write a really good song, but I had to make the bed . . ." *

Once. When I was twenty-two, I decided that rather than lose my soul, I would leave my prison and so I escaped and learned to fly again. Walking out on a lover of four years, still loving him, was pure torture, but the desire for self-preservation was too strong inasmuch as my two choices--stay and commit suicide within the year, or run and take a chance--leaned, ultimately, towards survival. The love is still there sometimes, but regret is nonexistent. It didn't dawn on me till I was a junior in high school that females were viewed differently than males. I always assumed people judged me the way I judged them, on personal merit. I nearly fell in love with a young college student. He was brilliant. One day he discovered I had "brains." This so destroyed his concept of females as fluff-heads that HE had an emotional breakdown, assisted by too much acid. I learned that transgressing my sex role was mighty powerful stuff. However, I kept forgetting not to be clever and inquisitive and outspoken, so before too long, I had the reputation for being "aggressive," (oh! boo! hiss!) to the point of being a "castrating bitch" (heaven forbid!) and later, for being a "nymphomaniac" (shame on me for not being sexually passive but available, verbalizing my displeasure over a lousy fuck, and worst of all for actually enjoying sex--tsk tsk).

Even later, I learned there are different forms of rape besides being brutally fucked by a slobbering sex pervert late at night while walking alone on some deserted street. Instead, I learned that rape can be nonviolent and that it can take the form of guilt-tripping (Okay, okay, I'll give in--anything to shut up the hassling. . . .)

I learned that the Double Standard was alive and well; that I can have all the shit jobs I want, headed by being a housewife, but that the men have the REAL jobs so they can support THEIR families; that I would always be second-best if "best" at all; that I was made for fondling by strangers; that it was my duty to serve my male lovers; that only men create art; that children's care is a woman's duty and moral responsibility; that I should be weak and feminine; that I should get married before I become an old maid despised by society; that I should stay at home where I belonged; that I had penis envy; that I was inherently inferior;

---

*Judith Busch, "Why are No Great Women Artists?" in The Woman's Songbook, ed. Judith Busch and Laura X (Oral History Project of the Women's History Research Center, 1971).

that I was better at doing laundry, washing out dirty diapers, picking up clothes on the floor, and scrubbing toilets; that I wouldn't be desirable to a MAN unless I wore shorter dresses; that my crotch smelled; that my tits weren't big enough; that I wasn't quiet enough; that I had to sleep with my male professors to get good grades; that I shouldn't trust my "girl" friends; that I should shave my arm pits and legs; that I should smile prettily and often; that I should flirt with men to get what I wanted from them; and most of all, I learned that I would never ever get a man if I was a feminist; so, I didn't get a man and wrote that song instead.

ELLEN BERARD KIRCHNER

Marilyn Becker
Psychology Constructs the Female

Wayne County Community College
Summer 1973

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I was born into a low-income middle class Catholic family. Mother stayed home, took care of the house, wore the same dress every day, and made kettles of soup and loaves of yeast bread. My father worked for the government: he left at the same time every morning and came home at the same time every evening. As far back as I can remember, I knew myself only as someone who asked, "Who am I?"

I went through twelve years of school. Average grades were easy to come by with little or no effort. I was popular and dependable. After high school I worked as a secretary until I was 22, at which time I married and became a wife. A few months after my marriage, I had a baby and became a mother.

After the baby girl was born I knew one thing new, and that was that I was very very angry. I went into that hospital as nobody and I came out of that hospital a savage. That girl baby had a right to live and if she did, so did I. The shock of having the responsibility for teaching her how to live ignited an emotion that had been suppressed from birth.

I gave priority first to doing what I wanted to do and immediately realized that I didn't know what it was I wanted to do, much less how to do it. I solved that problem with alcohol.

I learned how to be entertained and to entertain, step in and out of clubs and bars at leisure, dance the twist and limbo in a bikini, and seduce men like a professional prostitute. In the meantime I delivered two more babies, went to church on Sunday, swapped plant rootings with the neighbors and behaved like an extraordinarily devoted and loyal wife. To this day, the man I was married to does not know that I was anything but devoted. He was never home. The only one who noticed that something was wrong was the gynecologist. His diagnosis was chronic fatigue and nervous exhaustion, and his remedy was tranquilizers. Now I had a reinforcement between drink shakes, and I could continue as a dutiful housewife and part-time swinger. The drinking could continue without visible signs of disturbance, and I soon felt strong enough to consider a divorce.

I packed the babies and left Florida, returning to Detroit, city of infinite employment opportunities. The first obstacle I encountered was a scarcity of childcare facilities at a price I could afford. The second problem was that my shorthand skills were rusty, and I had no money for refresher courses, or time, with three babies to care for. I was stuck. I decided to stay in the marriage, buy a house, raise the babies, and hope that the alcohol and pills would keep me glued together. It worked, too, for a while.

The children were now beginning school, and just to prove how socially active I was, I became involved in PTA committee work, civic organizations, scouting. I was a regular little community mother during the day, and at night I either fluttered around the clubs or draped myself over a table at any one of a number of Second Avenue or East Jefferson bars. By this time I had forgotten that I ever wanted to do anything else except drink. My husband was very busy; I don't know what it was he was so busy doing.

In addition to committee meetings, babycaring and the bars, I had also found time for an affair with a married man. It was a relationship full of romantic, impulsive, passionate love. During our infrequent, surreptitious encounters, he would encourage me to do the one thing I wanted to do, which was by now nothing but drink. He had no emotional responsibility or investment in me at all. All he was interested in was fucking, and he was getting that.

The schedule was getting very tight, and the strain was beginning to leak through the tranquilizer-booze fog. Again, it was the gynecologist who saw it first. This time his suggestion was psychiatric help. The psychiatrist he referred me to was unequivocally opposed to the affair and the alcohol and refused further help unless I stopped both activities. I was too desperate to give these up, and too desperate to give up the prospective help, so I lied to him, saying I had done as he requested.

I continued therapy with this man twice a week at $30.00 a visit, roaming up and down the gamut of childhood events, while he made moral evaluations. At the end of several months I took an overdose of pills and was carried into a hospital where I came as close as I had ever come to doing the only thing I knew how to do well--to die.

One of the psychiatrists on the staff was a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, and I was released after three weeks of involuntary confinement under the condition that I would attend AA meetings. At home once again, I continued where I left off, right back into alcohol and pills.

My greatest fear at this point was commitment to a hospital. The threat of incarceration led me to track down a new therapist. My only purpose in doing so originally was to protect myself from the possibility of confinement. I was beyond the point where I felt I could get help. The person who asked the question, "Who am I?" was long gone.

I had been going to this second therapist for four years when I became aware that I could not be drunk and be with him at the same time--although he accepted me entirely as a drunk, or as anything else I chose to project. It was through his acceptance that I decided to try for sobriety. At this point I became totally dependent. For the first time in my life I felt trust. Regardless of what I chose to do I believed he would support me.

I made grand attempts to abstain from tranquilizers and booze and was successful for very limited periods of time. Finally, I chose to attend AA meetings daily if necessary to stay sober. The support I got from the AA members and my therapist brought about a split with reality as I had known it. I became a totally passive, dependent individual, aware of people and environment only with these people, aware of nothing at any other time. I can only describe the next year and a half as a blackout period similar to those which occurred when I had been drinking. But I came out of this blacked-out time an entirely new person.

At first I became aware of the fact that I could see, and then that I could hear, as though I had been both blind and deaf all of my life. A short while later I experienced the joy of walking as though I had been physically crippled from birth. And the greatest joy of all was learning to speak: using words for the first time with the realization that each one had a meaning and could be interpreted meaningfully by others. I began to understand what "understanding" is, and I could remember everything--even from birth.

Today there are oppressors whom I recognize, but I have the assurance that I am not my own oppressor. We each have a potential to know ourselves into infinity.

JULIE DODD WOOD

Judith G. Stitzel
English and American Women Writers

West Virginia University
Spring 1974

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I am a white-skinned female American, born into a family of working class origins in the richest county and the largest city of one of the most impoverished states in this nation. My family consisted of five children and my mother and father. I grew up in a brick house, built by my father before I was born, somewhat isolated, and extremely beautiful. Relations with my family are very good to this day, all of us sharing respect and responsibility for each other's lives.

Impressions of my mother and father vary from the greatest admiration to a deep sympathy. I consider their lives to be products of a difficult and demanding environment and of their own incredible labor and energy. My father has been a bricklayer all his life, as his father and grandfather were before him. He has believed deeply in the destiny of workers and the need for their solidarity in American society. He has educated himself in philosophy, literature, and politics; he graduated from college in social sciences at the age of forty. His activism in the Labor Movement and the Civil Rights Movement was a beacon for me.

My mother raised five children. She came from a rural family in Calhoun County, West Virginia, to a position she has held for several years: personal office manager for Jay Rockefeller. She has run a family and a house and a politician's office. My parents have inspired me; neglected me for U. S. foreign policy controversies; showed me the heights and depths of the human spirit; and at times nearly crumpled from the pain. I have learned life not merely by listening to them, but by watching them: their wrinkles come, their tears flow, and their joy commands my heart. I know them, and through them I have seen life.

As my parents' origins were working class, through their prosperity mine are middle class: my earliest expectations, my associations, and my mannerisms. I have changed a great deal. I have become one who evaluates, moralizes, and questions. From the deathlike sleep of American childhood, I have risen. I am now alive.

Several incidents have changed the way of life I was accustomed to and perhaps driven me in new directions. The United States involved its armed forces in warfare in southeast Asia. Young people, following the lead of intellectuals and radicals, divorced themselves from traditional values and developed their own "youth culture." I met a young male who challenged me and befriended me. I married him and left my family for my own life. These incidents propelled me toward the unknown. That is where I now reside.

I am currently enrolled full time in West Virginia University classes. I work twenty hours a week as a cashier in the student union building. I live with the man I married seventeen months ago and two cats in a log cabin. I am perpetually in a state of confusion, often depressed to the point of suicide, often elated to the point of Nirvana. I am good and evil, energetic and exhausted, cynical and sentimental, and bitter, but certainly not all of the time.

I am a woman. Because I am a woman those in control of my society have decided many things about my position in it. I am to have long hair, smooth hairless legs, and protruding breasts. I am to assume the function of childrearing, of secretarial jobs, nursing the sick, and teaching young children. I am to spend most of my time with children, and as quickly as my husband can afford to feed them, I am to go where he goes, want what he wants, and live as he lives. I am not to think seriously or do anything seriously. I am to smile graciously, paint my face, and be amiable always. I mustn't take seriously the facts of my sex's slave labor throughout human society, our misery in childbirth, or our rape and murder and shame at the hands of HIM. I am property, much like cattle, to be distributed and manipulated according to hair color, dowry, or foot length. I am to hide my face in Asia and whore myself on Chicago's southside to survive. I am woman. I tempted man. I brought him down from grace. I castrate him. I am on a pedestal of privilege and security. I am the mother that so terribly stunted his psychological growth. I will have justice. I will have an answer to my outrage.

RESEARCH

Many of the papers submitted for this collection were enthusiastic and often original studies of important subject matter: papers on medieval women artists, on nineteenth-century women's writing clubs, on political figures like Emma Goldman and Eleanor Marx Aveling, on attitudes toward women in Time Magazine, in rock music, in Jungian psychology, in literature.

The five papers included here combine significant subject matter and careful presentation. They are arranged to suggest a movement observable in the history of work in women's studies generally: from a consideration of the ways in which women have been limited by patriarchal institutions and ideology to a discussion of women's contributions, in spite of these limitations, and of their involvement in social change.

Leslie J. Calman's paper is a witty discussion of the images of women in Child's Popular Ballads; written for a literature class at Barnard, it reflects Calman's own interest in folksinging. M. Catherine Kennard's thoughtful study of anti-feminist ideology in the Mormon Church came out of a class on Rhetoric of Women's Liberation at Humboldt State College in California; I included her autobiographical statement as an introduction to the paper because it shows how even in research and theory, women's studies encourages a connection between one's life and one's work. Valerie Struble wrote her piece on women in sports reporting for a class called Literary and Social Views of Women at the University of Pittsburgh. It combines a discussion of two fields where women have recently broken some especially difficult barriers: athletics and journalism.

Deborah Reich's study of Margaret Fuller rose out of her own interest in the women's liberation movement. The only selection in this book from a class not specifically oriented toward women's studies, I included it because Reich herself was clearly a "women's studier," with three unusually good papers in the files at Barnard's Women's Resource Center, and because Fuller is so important a figure in the evolution of feminism in this country.

Jane Wheeler's balanced examination of young women in

China and their contribution to work in the countryside was written for a sociology seminar at UCLA. The seminar has continued as a study group with an expanded membership.

Women's studies has stressed more than traditional disciplines the importance of self-exploration, the acceptance of the affective as a valid mode of learning, and the involvement in social action as a logical outcome. But that those methods are incompatible with hard work and careful thought is a notion not of women's studies, but of its detractors. Papers such as these should lay to rest any lingering doubts about the "academic validity" of women's studies.

LESLIE J. CALMAN

Catharine R. Stimpson
Images of Women in Literature

Barnard College
Spring 1973

A DETAILED, IN-DEPTH, INCISIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ROLES OF WOMEN IN CHILD'S *POPULAR BALLADS*

Introduction

If *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* collected by Francis James Child are at all representative of the traditional social mores in England and Scotland, one can only thank the Good Lord (or Lady) that she lives in another time and place.*

The women in these ballads are nearly always interacting exclusively with men; the men might be their brothers, fathers, or husbands, but more often than not, the ballads examine relationships between lovers. The woman is generally either a helpless maiden in need of a strong, masculine protector, or the hapless victim of another of those strong masculine types. In both cases, her dependence and inferiority (or at best an absurd naiveté) are clear.

On rare occasions, a woman will reject her passivity and do something courageous. However, those women who appear clever are so only in comparison with the idiotic bumbling of the men around them. And those women who partake of audacious adventures normally do so in order to find their lost lovers, or to follow one who is slipping away. Men are always the focus of the women's actions.

Throughout these ballads, women function only in relation to some man. Normally they are victims; when, in an occasional

---

*The *Ballads* were published in 5 volumes, 10 parts (Cambridge, Mass., 1882-1898). Subsequent references refer to this edition and will be cited in the text by part, number, and page.

ballad, a woman will turn the tables against some helpless man, she is sometimes tricky and clever, but she may also be cruel. Thus, woman evokes sympathy when she is downtrodden, but she is often contemptuous when strong. She is either walking mush, or she is a shrew; a happy, independent woman is rare to the point of nonexistence.

The Hideous Woman Transformed by a Man's Kindness--or Blessed Be He

"King Henry" (II:32, 297-330) is the story of an absolutely grotesque woman who is befriended by a courteous knight. This woman is not the average, everyday, run-of-the mill ugly:

> Her teeth was a' like teather stakes,
> Her nose like club or mell;
> And I ken naething she 'peared to be
> But the fiend that wons in hell. (A-6)

The two meet while Henry is out riding. She demands that he give her some meat, and, being a good knight, he does so, although not without a good deal of sorrow; for in acceding to her requests, he slays his horse, his dogs, and his pet hawks. She is still not satisfied, however, and demands that he take off all his clothes and lie down with her. Henry is hardly delighted at the prospect:

> "O God forbid," says King Henry,
> "That ever the like betide;
> That ever the fiend that wons in hell
> Should streak down by my side." (A-17)

But for some reason, probably inner knightly compulsiveness, he does as she commands. Gallantry does not go unrewarded, however. Upon rising he beholds "the fairest lady that ever was seen." Obviously, our pushy shrew had been bewitched somewhere along the way, but we never learn how or why. As in all good spells she was completely helpless until an unselfish man came along to help her.

The ballad "Kemp Owyne" (II:34, 306-313) has a similar theme of a woman whose evil stepmother (a powerful but wicked woman) casts a spell upon her, and who is ultimately rescued by the kisses of a brave young man. In one version, the man is her own brother.

When these ballads set out to make a woman hideous, they really do a good job. In the A version, which is Scottish,

Her breath grew strang, her hair grew lang,
And twisted thrice about the tree. (A-6)

When she is rescued, her breath becomes "sweet." (A precursor of Listerine?)

In the English version, the woman turned into a worm. Her brother, who was in another land, heard of this odd event, and hurried home to rescue her. After accomplishing this task, he and the sister return to their father's home. The father's reaction is a rather telling indication of his concern for his daughter's plight.

His absence and her serpent shape
The king had long deplored;
He now rejoiced to see them both
Again to him restored. (Appendix-32)

Any father who equates the two phenomena is either not unfond of worms, or indifferent about the fate of his female child.

The Unwed Mother--or Daddy is Cheap and Life is Foul

There are several Child ballads in which a father, or occasionally a bridegroom, discovers that a young woman whom he had presumed was a marriageable virgin is in fact pregnant. This turn of events has disastrous consequences for the man's financial plans, and he often looses his anger directly upon the woman; sometimes he punishes her indirectly by murdering her lover. The woman is a tool in a business transaction, and her emotions are not allowed to interfere.

"Lady Diamond" (IX:269, 29-38) is the tale of a girl who sleeps with her father's "bonnie kitchen-boy." Although some versions are more clear on this point than others, the father generally goes to talk to his daughter only when it becomes painfully obvious, because "her petticoat grew short before, and her stays they wouldna meet," that someone "had brought her body to shame" (C-3, A-2). Lady Diamond's father does not waste any time getting to the point of his consternation. He asks:

"Is it to a laird? or is it to a lord?
Or a baron of high degree?
Or is it William, my bonnie kitchen-boy?
Tell now the truth to me." (A-5)

The question implies that if the paramour had been one of wealth and nobility, the father would have delightedly set about arranging a marriage. Under the circumstances, however, he kills his servant, and delivers his heart in a cup to his daughter. In most of the ballad's versions, she dies of that famous and mysterious malady, a broken heart.

The father of "Lady Maisry" (III:65, 112-125) does not leave his daughter's death up to chance. Because of the snooping of a kitchen boy, he learns that the reason Maisry has been spurning all the young lords who court her is that she has already loved another. Her parents and siblings condemn her as a whore; they burn her, pregnant and alive, in a bonfire until she dies and her body falls apart in several manner of grisly ways. In this ballad, one can read the economic distress the father faces because his daughter has not complied with his plans in his attraction to the wealth of his daughter's suitors. However, the emphasis on her family's feeling that she is a whore suggests that they were equally governed by a code of morality. Economics and piety here go hand in hand.

The threatened loss of an economic or political alliance is obviously the motivation for the father's brutal actions in "Fair Janet"(III:64, 100-111). Janet is in love with Sweet Willie, but her father informs her that she must marry a French lord. Several months and a few verses later, the lord is still sailing somewhere on the ocean, but Janet delivers Sweet Willie's baby. Immediately upon giving birth, Janet hears from her father that the lord has arrived. She pleads with her father:

"There's a sair pain in my head, father,
    There's a sair pain in my side;
And ill, O ill, am I, father,
    This day for to be a bride." (A-17)

His reply is completely selfish, as he brutally uses his daughter for his own betterment:

"O ye maun busk this bonny bride,
    And put a gay mantle on;
For she shall wed this auld French Lord,
    Gin she should die the morn." (A-18)

Brutality is not limited to fathers, however. "Lord Ingram and Chiel Wyet" (III:66, 126-136) tells of two brothers who are both in love with the same woman. Her parents favor Lord Ingram, but Lady Maisery makes another decision:

Lord Ingram wood her Lady Maisery
    Into her father's ha;
Chiel Wyet wood her Lady Maisery
    Among the sheet so sma. (A-5)

Her father is quite aware of his daughter's preference; nevertheless, he arranges her marriage to Lord Ingram. As the newlyweds are lying in bed on their first evening together, Ingram discovers that his bride is quite pregnant. (Clothing must have been remarkably deceptive in those days.) Either he has been incredibly stupid or too haughty ever to listen to what women tell him, for Maisery's answer to his inquiry is:

"I told you twice, I told you thrice,
Ere ye came me to wed,
That Chiel Wyet, your only brother,
One night lay in my bed." (A-23)

Ingram begs her to pretend that the child is his, but even when he offers the child a substantial dowry, she refuses.

At this point in their argument, Chiel Wyet appears from out of nowhere and begins to fight with Ingram; they manage to kill each other. In some versions of the ballad Maisery goes mad, in another she dies of grief, and in another she becomes a beggar. All this unhappiness could have been avoided if Ingram and Lady Maisery's father had not treated her and her baby as barter.

In at least one ballad, "Johnie Scot" (IV:99, 377-398), the mean, nasty father loses out to the valiant lover. The father discovers that his daughter is pregnant with Johnie Scot's child. Dad, no candidate for the Albert Schweitzer Compassion Award, orders:

"Ye pit her into prison strong,
An starve her till she die." (A-4)

Our helpless heroine sends word to Johnie of these goings-on and he comes to court, where he announces himself to the king. If the king had his way, the young man would have been hung immediately, but Johnie refuses to surrender without a fight. The king obliges by sending into the fray his house-warrior, who seems to be around for occasions just such as this. "Bring your Italian here," cries Johnie, who then proceeds to slay him. Although the two never explicitly struck such a bargain, Johnie's victory makes the father relent, and he allows his daughter to marry Johnie. The bridegroom calls for a priest to marry them, and the ever-money-conscious father calls for a clerk to arrange the marriage fee. But in Johnie there is a man of integrity; he has purchased a bride, but with deeds rather than cash:

"I'll have none of your gold," fair Johnie said,
"Nor none of your white monie;

But I will have my own fair bride,
For I vow that I've bought her dear." (C-27)

At this point the Pregnant Piece of Property and her owner ride off together. She has been tormented by one man and saved by another; her very existence as a daughter or lover has depended totally on the men around her. She has had no identity and certainly no power apart from them.

The Victim of Brutality--or Hi! I'm Woman! Exploit me!

"Prince Heathen" (IV:104, 424-426) does not have a delicate, flowery name, but then, he hardly deserves one. He takes Lady Margery May from her bower, locks her in a tower, rapes her, kills her relatives, and will not allow any women to be with her when she gives birth. He has done all this because she refused to love him; in retaliation, Heathen vowed to make her cry. At the ballad's end, she gives birth to his son, but has no blanket in which to wrap him. Heathen offers her his horse's blanket and this act of ironic cruelty finally causes Margery May to weep. The prince is thrilled and vows to love her always. His triumph is absolutely barbaric; he rejoices because he has finally broken the spirit of a brave and strong woman.

Man is again rewarded for his evil doings to women in "The Knight and the Shepherd's Daughter" (IV:110, 457-477). A knight comes upon a young girl who appears to be of a lower class, and he rapes her. The girl, however, is, according to various versions, the daughter of a duke or king; she races back to court and tells the king what has happened. The king promises her the equivalent of a shortgun wedding, which indeed comes to pass. But is the rapist punished for his deed? On the contrary, he learns to his pleasant surprise that his bride is quite wealthy:

He had both purse and person too,
And all at his command. (A-27)

Crime, for a man exploiting a woman, clearly pays.

Domestic bliss is not as great for the husband in "The Wife in Wether's Skin" (IX:277, 104-107; a wether is a castrated male sheep). He makes the mistake of marrying a woman who is of a higher class than himself. "He courted her and he brought her name/An thought she would prove a thrifty dame" (D-2), but much to his consternation, he finds that his wife refuses to bake, brew, spin, wash, or wring. The husband feels drastic action is in order, but, because he fears her relations, he dares not beat her. Instead, he takes the skin from a wether, places it on his wife's back, and beats that. The wife changes her ways, and the husband rejoices "that he has made an ill wife gude" (B-12). This manner of settling domestic difficulties is highly consistent with the methods of courtship in the previous ballads; surely it would be unreasonable to expect equality to come magically at marriage.

Occasionally, a woman will manage to triumph over her oppressor. In "Walter Lesly" (IX:296, 168-169) a girl is abducted by a man who wants her mother's money; she manages to escape while he is asleep. More ingenious still is Lady Isabel in "Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight" (I:4, 22-62). In some versions of the ballad, the knight places a spell over the girl that makes her go with him to the greenwood, or to the waterside; he then announces that she is to be the eighth king's daughter he has killed. There is no apparent motive for the planned murder (A, B). In most of the versions, he woos her in more conventional ways to go riding with him; again she is to be one of a long line of murders, but the motive is clearly to get her jewels and rich clothing (C-F). But in these versions, Isabel is too clever for the man; she pleads modesty, and asks the knight to turn around while she takes off her fine clothing before he drowns her. The ballad loses just a bit of credibility when the evil, bloodthirsty murderer accedes to her request. Lady Isabel catches the idiot off guard, and drowns him. She does emerge triumphant, but one wonders at the worthiness of her foe.

Unrequited Love--or Give Me Nunnery or Give Me Death

In this group of ballads, the women are so dependent on the men that they simply refuse to function without them. "Lady Alice" (IV:85, 279-280) dies almost immediately upon seeing the corpse of "an old and true lover." "Sweet William's Ghost" (III: 77, 226-233) visits Margaret and demands her "faith and troth." She complies, and, going the way of all faithful women, as soon as the ghost disappears,

> Wan grew her cheeks, she closd her een,
> Stretched her soft limbs, and dy'd. (A-16)

These weakly constituted women expire at occasions less traumatic than ghostly visitations as well. The lady who is in love with the long absent "Lord Lovell" (III:75, 204-212) slowly pines away for love and longing of him.

Fair Annie finds another alternative; she cannot marry the man she loves, and so joins "The Holy Nunnery" (IX:303, 179-181). One can decide for oneself which is the more extreme reaction. In any case, in these ballads a normal, healthy life is apparently an impossibility for a woman who lacks her man.

And if one is to believe "Child Waters" (III:63, 83-100), some women will go to any lengths--and depths--to remain with their lovers.

Fair Ellen is the passive, almost willing recipient of completely dehumanizing abuse from Child Waters, whose child she bears. Since Child Waters is riding off in search of a wife for himself, Fair Ellen decides to accompany him, but can only do so in the guise of his footpage. As if this turn of events is not degrading enough, what follows can only be described as intense sadomasochism. In the course of their travels, she, dressed like a boy, runs barefoot while he rides swiftly; he never slows down or asks her to ride. They come to a body of water, and Ellen cannot swim. Child Waters, in an effort to rid himself of her, plunges ahead; but he is disappointed as she, willing to drown for him, manages to make it across:

The salt waters bare up Ellens clothes,
    Our Ladye bare vpp he[r] chinne,
And Child Waters was a woe man, good Lord,
    To see Faire Ellen swimme. (A-16)

They arrive at a beautiful hotel that seems to be the rough equivalent of a latter-day country club, or perhaps a swinging singles bar; twenty-four women are there doing nothing but playing ball and chess. While Child Waters mixes with the ladies, Fair Ellen leads the horses to a stall. Child Waters' mother perceptively notes the rather odd anatomical make-up of her son's page:

"He's liker a woman big wi bairn,
    Than a young lord's serving man." (B-25)

However neither she nor anyone else pursues this intriguing subject.

In the A version of the ballad, Child Waters achieves a new low as he sends Ellen, who of course meekly goes, to procure his night's amusement;

And goe thee downe into yonder towne,
    And low into the street;
The ffairest ladye that thou can find,
    Hyer her in mine armes to sleep,
And take her vp in thine armes two,
    For filinge of her ffeete. (A-28)

After returning with the whore, Ellen realizes she has no place to sleep, and obtains permission from Child Waters "That I may sleep in att your bedds feete" (A-30). Ellen's degradation is not yet complete. After what must have been, at best, a disagreeable night, she rises to feed the horse, and, in the manger, gives birth to a child. Child Waters' sharply sensed mother hears her moans, and sends the son out to investigate. He overhears Ellen, who is nauseatingly humble to the end:

She said, Lullabye, my owne deere child!
Lullabye, deere child, deere!
I wold thy father were a king,
Thy mother layd on a beere! (A-37)

For some reason, Ellen's song moves Child Waters at last, and he proposes to her. Although this is no doubt intended to be a happy ending, a little skepticism would seem in order. With a courtship like that, who needs marriage?

Fury of a Woman Scorned--or She Who Laughs Last

The women in the English and Scottish ballads generally follow one of two routes in dealing with such crisis situations as their abandonment by their trueloves: they either die, or murder. Often the abandonment is accompanied by grave insult from the departing lovers, or from rival woman.

For example, the women in "Young Hunting" (III:68, 142-155) is the antithesis of the masochistic Fair Ellen. This young lady apparently believes that extremism in the defense of honor is no vice. Having accepted her offer of "coal and candle-light" as well as an invitation to spend the night, Young Hunting tells his old love, "I have a sweetheart in Garlick's Wells I love thrice better than thee." She finds this insult too great to bear, and

When he was in her arms laid,
And gieing her kisses sweet,
Then out she's tane a little penknife,
And woundid him sae deep. (B-6)

The conclusions of this group of ballads may be as tragic as those discussed above, but at least the women here have a bit more spunk. Even when a woman pines away, she does so with a dramatic flair that lends a little artistry to her untimely end.

This is certainly the case in "Fair Margaret and Sweet William" (III:74, 199-203). Although the ballad never explains why, William marries a woman other than Margaret, although

A fairer creature than Lady Margaret
    Sweet William could find none. (B-1)

In a very matter-of-fact, unflowery way, the ballad states that Margaret dies. But while some of the women in these ballads [illegible] so passive they appear half dead when alive, Margaret achieves her finest hour when dead. During William's wedding night,

In glided Margaret's grimly ghost,
    And stood at William's feet. (B-7)

But not content merely to frighten or torment him by her spirited presence, she eerily and tauntingly speaks:

How d'ye like your bed, Sweet William?
    How d'ye like your sheet?
And how d'ye like that brown lady?
    That lies in your arms asleep? (B-8)

William acknowledges that "better I like that fair lady/That stands at my bed feet." On the following morning, he dies of sorrow.

Indeed, those men who treat their lovers badly in this group of ballads do not often escape unscathed themselves. "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" (III:73, 179-199) tells a story similar to that in "Fair Margaret and Sweet William." In this ballad the reason Thomas does not wed Annet, but rather one who is less beautiful, is explicitly because of the latter's wealth. Thomas finds the Fair Annet much more attractive than the "nut-brown bride," but "the brown bride she has houses and land" as well as "gowd and gear," and so Thomas marries her.

Annet dresses in her finest clothes and attends the wedding reception, behaving with less than courtesy.

"Is this your bride?" Fair Annet she sayd,
    "Methinks she looks wondrous browne;
Thou mightest have had as fair a woman
    As ever trod the ground." (D-13)

In several of the versions, the brown bride responds verbally to this insult; the rival women trade racist slurs:

"And whair got ye that rose-water
    That does mak yee sae white?"

"O I did get the rose-water
    Whair ye wull neir get nane,

For I did get that very rose-water
Into my mither's wame." (A-23-24)

This response goads the hostess into action. She takes her "little penknife" (apparently standard equipment) and slays Annet (D-15). Thomas really had loved Annet all along, and so

He cut off his bride's head from her shoulders,
And he threw it against the wall. (D-18)

He then murders himself.

Another brown woman is similarly indignant to slights against her. "The Brown Girl" (IX:295, 166-168) receives a letter from her love,

Saying no more he loved me,
For that I was so brown. (B-23)

Soon after, he falls sick, and wanting the best of both worlds, he sends for the brown girl to come and comfort him. She goes, but without haste, and finds him dying. Her response is not exactly regretful:

She could not for laughing stand
Upright upon her feet. (A-6)

"O never will I forget, forgive,
So long as I have breath;
I'll dance above your green, green grave
Where you do lie beneath." (B-16)

Still another equally jolly soul dwells within the ballad "Child Owlet" (IX:291, 156-157). Lady Erskine invites the young Childe Owlet to cuckold his uncle and her husband, Lord Randall. Owlet refuses. Lady Erskine does not take this rebuff lightly. She wounds herself slightly and reports to Lord Randall that Childe Owlet has attempted to rape her. Randall ties Owlet to four horses, and sends them racing off; Owlet's body tears into innumerable pieces.

The women in these ballads do seem to have a difficult time coping with disappointment. Calm rationality is not their characteristic response. Even though today we recognize the healthiness of women's anger at insult and betrayal, it would be nice to find somewhere in these ballads a self-controlled woman of wisdom and humanity.

Adventurous Women--or Where He Leads, I Will Follow

The Child ballads do contain some instances in which women will brave heavy odds and risk life and limb in order to reach their final goal. However, before slipping into an ecstasy of delight that women have finally emerged as independent, strong spirits, one must realize that these women are not out to discover a cure for the dreaded woman-turned-worm disease or to perform some other socially useful role; their final goal is virtually always to catch or retain a man. They function independently only for the purpose of achieving a secure dependence.

In "Rose the Red and White Lily" (IV:103, 415-423), two women dress as men and follow their lovers; one goes to court, and the other joins a band of knights who live a la Robin Hood in the forest. Both manage to fool their male companions for a long time, but the leader of the knights, Brown Robin, discovers the feminine identity of White Lily (he is her old lover). Nine months later, she gives birth to his child. In the context of these ballads, any other turn of events would seem almost perverted. Rose the Red comes to aid her in childbirth, and manages a pretty decent swordfight with Brown Robin, who tries to prevent "him" from entering the bower. Rose's love, Arthur, comes from court to investigate the rumor that Brown Robin's man has borne a child. ("Why is this knight different from all other knights?") Under these incriminating circumstances, both women confess their true identities. The result of their adventures is the end they have presumably sought all along: there is a double wedding in the greenwood.

"The Baliff's Daughter of Isington" (IV:105, 426-428) dresses like a man and goes to London in search of her lover; he has been gone for seven years. She finds him, reveals herself, and, of course, marries him.

Another adventurer is "The Famous Flower of Serving-Men" (IV:106, 428-431). She had once been married and wealthy, but thieves had murdered her husband and stolen her money. Vowing not to despair, she disguises herself as a man, which appears to be a prerequisite to any sort of excitement, and goes off in a successful search for a position as a serving-man. One day, as she is singing to an old man at the court, she reveals her background. He in turn tells the king, in language our era will especially enjoy, that "Sweet William is a lady gay." Is the king angry because his page deceived him? No, he feels not anger, but amour. They are married without delay.

The Clever Woman--or Minnie Mouse, in a Stunning Victory, Defeats Mickey Mouse

In a few ballads, the women are clearly more bright and successful than the men. But as in "Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight," these women do not triumph over worthy opponents. For instance, in "Our Goodman" (IX:274, 88-95), the husband, to whom his wife affectionately refers as "you old cuckold" (B), is a complete idiot. Indeed, the ballad is a good-natured mockery of his foolishness. He finds a horse in the stable, which his wife tells him is really a cow. She convinces him that the boots he sees are really water buckets; the sword becomes a stick for stirring porridge; a powdered wig is really, she assures, him a chicken, while a man's coat is actually a blanket. Finally, the husband finds a man in his bed.

"A man?" quod she.
"Ay, a man," quo he.

"Poor blind body,
And blinder mat yet be!
It's a new milking maid,
My mither sent to me." (A-22-23)

"Old Wichet a cuckold went out, and a cuckold he came home" (B-28). His intellect remained similarly stagnant; one really cannot be too much in awe of a woman who outsmarts a moron.

The maiden in "The Friar in the Well" (IX:276, 100-103) deserves a little more credit. A friar comes to her and asks for her maidenhead. She tells him that if she were to consent, she would surely go to hell. The friar assures her that "If thou wert in hell I could sing thee out" (A-3). She agrees to his request, on the condition that he bring her some money. While he is gone, collecting the necessary sum, she spreads a cloth across the well. As he returns with the money, she cries out that her father is coming. "O," declares the brave friar, "then where shall I run?" She suggests he hide behind the cloth, and he, of course, tumbles into the well. He pleads for help, but she replies:

"Ye said ye wad whistle me out of hell;
Now whistle your ain sel out o the well." (B-11)

She finally does help him out, and keeps the money to "pay for fouling my water" (A-15). Not only does she preserve her precious maidenhead, but she has made a profit on the afternoon's festivities.

Family--or the Tie That Chokes

On rare occasion, the ballads will tell of some familial relationship that is beneficial to a woman. Such is the case, for instance, with the brother-sister relationship in "Kemp Owyne." However, even in this ballad, the villain is the stepmother. For the most part, when a male relative might appear to mean well in these ballads, he is actually protecting his own interests in an unbearably macho fashion. And in comparison to the influence the overbearing mothers in these ballads have on their children, Mrs. Portnoy's son is like an orphan.

"The Cruel Mother" (I:20, 218-225) murders her own newborn child because he is the bastard son of her father's clerk. The mother of "Prince Robert" (IV:87, 284-287) poisons her son because he wishes to marry against her will.

After a long journey, "The Lass of Roch Royal" (III:76, 213-225) knocks on the door of her truelove's castle; Lord Gregory's possessive mother answers and tells her:

> "Lord Gregory, he is not at home,
>   But he is to the sea;
> If you have any word to him,
>   I pray you leave 't with me."

In fact, Gregory is within the house, but asleep. In some versions the mother pretends to be Gregory, and she cruelly sends the pregnant girl away, declaring that he does not love her. The girl dies, and when the son discovers what his mother has done, he too expires.

Fathers and brothers share a compulsion to preserve the honor of their daughters and sisters. One drawback to this grand nobility is that their "protection" is usually unwnated by the woman in question. Another factor that diminishes the men's gallantry is that their real concern is generally not for the well-being of their female relations, but for their own economic betterment.

One father kills "The Clerk's Twa Sons O Owensford" (III: 72, 173-179) because they have slept with his two daughters. He is a powerful mayor; he is concerned that his daughters will make matches that are not economically fruitful.

> "O have they lain with my daughters dear,
>   Heirs out ower a' my land,
> The morn, ere I eat or drink,
>   I'll hang them with my hand." (C-8)

Needless to say, he does not bother to consider how these murders will affect his daughters.

May Margret's lover, "Clerk Saunders" (III:69, 156-167), meets his death at the hands of May Margret's seven brothers. They do not comment on their reason for killing him except to say "We hae but ae sister/And see there her lying wi a knight." The brothers murder Clerk while he is asleep in the arms of their sister.

There are several Child ballads that deal with brother-sister incest. Sometimes, due to the long absence of one, the siblings do not realize their filial relationship until it is too late; in other ballads both are quite aware that they are committing incest. No matter what the circumstance, it is always the sister who suffers most. In "Sheath and Knife" (I:16, 185-187) the sister asks her brother to kill her. The brother of "Lizie Wan" (II:51, 447-449) murders her because she has told their father and mother that she is pregnant with their child. No one in the family seems in the least bit upset at her death.

In "The Bonny Hind" (II:50, 444-447) the two protagonists commit incest unknowingly; the heroine commits suicide immediately upon learning the truth. A very similar incident occurs in "The King's Dochter Lady Jean" (II:52, 450-454), although in some versions of this ballad the brother dies as well. As a general rule, however, incest, and indeed any illicit sexual meeting, is a cause for much greater shame on the part of the woman than on the part of the man. This might not be so if these English and Scottish ladies were not quite so fertile; but, since they seem forever to be getting pregnant, they are forced to confront their deeds in a way that the men are not.

Conclusion--or If Woman is Going to Get Ahead in This World (or in Any Other) She Has Got to Be Tough

In the overwhelming majority of the ballads that this essay has examined, women have been at the mercy of men. Men have saved men; men have destroyed them or made them miserable. Only a few women have not had their lives completely bound up in some man.

But one women does emerge as completely triumphant. No one, but no one, can prevent her from doing as she pleases. And how, in the context of these sexist ballads, does she accomplish this feat? Her achievement is one not of brains, not of subtlety, not of delicacy; she wins through the application of sheer, indignant force. This woman remains undaunted. This woman, in short, has a hell of a lot of nerve.

The devil himself comes to take away "The Farmer's Curst Wife" (IX:278, 107-108). Her husband is simply thrilled to see her go:

> "O welcome, good Satan, with all my heart!
> "I hope you and she will never more part." (A-4)

Does our woman take this lying down (so to speak)? Is she to be one of the oppressed masses? Not she!

> O then she did kick the young imps about;
> Says one to the other, Let's try turn her out.
>
> She spied thirteen imps all dancing in chains,
> She up with her pattens and beat out their brains.
>
> She knocked the old Satan against the wall:
> "Let's turn her out, or she'll murder us all." (A-7-9)

The devil is not used to such abuse, and, to preserve hell, he takes her back to her husband, with the comment:

> "I have been a tormenter the whole of my life,
> But I neer was tormented so as with your wife." (A-11)

One can presume that this woman never listened when father or brother told her what to do; it is doubtful that she ever pined away from a broken heart.

And so, in the words of an anonymous balladeer, "In Chutzpah, there is strength."

M. CATHERINE KENNARD

Kathy Marshall
The Rhetoric of Women's Liberation

California State University, Humboldt
Spring 1974

WOMEN AND THE MORMON CHURCH

I was born in San Francisco to descendants of old Utah Mormon families who came to California after the Second World War to make a new life. Though ambivalent about the church, my parents raised their children as Mormons, and as a child I considered myself very religious. I remember vividly discovering at the age of eleven that according to the church black people did not have the same kinds of souls as white people. I was increasingly uncomfortable with the political conservatism and anti-intellectualism of the church. By the age of fourteen I seldom went to church at all. In 1969, after three years of college and one year of working, I discovered the women's movement.

Five years and many explorations later I have come back to confront my own beginnings in writing this paper. Researching was no problem; I avidly read all I could find on the church and women. But when I started to write, I ran into problems. I avoided working on the paper; several times I was physically weak and nauseous as I sat down to write the various drafts. I feld incredibly vulnerable. Who was I to know anything about the church? We were always told in Sunday School that there were secrets which we could know when we were older, when we were married in the Temple, and deeper secrets only our husbands could know, and then, too, secrets only Patriarchs and Apostles knew.

* * *

> The place of woman in the church,
> having been defined by divine decree,
> does not change from time to time.
> It remains constant. It is the same
> today as yesterday; it will be the
> same tomorrow.
>
> Belle S. Spafford
> The Improvement Era, May 1969

The role of women in the Mormon church has occasioned little debate until recently. Here and there may be found an article on the home and family, a tribute to motherhood, a poem about a pioneer woman, but virtually nothing is to be found during most of this century seriously attacking or defending the subjugation of women. During the early days of the church, the institution of polygamy did create a furor; the dispute included discussion of the nature of woman and her place in salvation. Within the church, leaders encouraged women to "submit cheerfully." In the larger debate raging back and forth between Salt Lake City and the East, the Mormons pointed to the prostitution and corruption in the rest of the country, while the "reformers" used the issue of polygamy to muster powerful emotional support to mask the government's attack on the economic and political power which the church had amassed within the Territory of Utah. The polygamous wives in hiding from the federal marshalls, moving year after year with or without their children, were not the real concern of the "reformers"; the debate was moralistic, never feminist in content. Women were merely incidental. Similarly, what feminism there was within the church has remained suppressed.[1]

The teachings of the Mormon church delineate strictly the behavior appropriate to its members. In particular, sex-typed behavior, inherent in the religious dogma, is highly regulated. Because Mormons tend to be a very homogeneous group, dissent labels one as the "other," of the devil, or at least not of the faithful.[2] Thus, from within the church comes only a very conservative rhetoric, supporting the role of woman as subordinate. This paper will examine the two full-length works dealing with the role of women to emerge from Mormon writers during the last decade. In relating the issues raised in these two books to the doctrines of the Mormon church, and attempting to place them in an historical setting, an analysis develops which begins to confront the Mormon view of women.

In 1963, Helen B. Andelin published Fascinating Womanhood, a book purporting to restore happiness to modern marriage by returning woman to her "natural" calling.[3] Mrs. Andelin explains to women how to understand men and how to develop certain "angelic" and "human" characteristics which men cannot resist. She promises women the "celestial" love of their husbands if they succeed in re-ordering their lives so as to place their husbands' needs first, to ensure that they be allowed to fulfill their God-given roles of "Guide," "Protector," and "Provider." Though not an officially sanctioned church book, the assumptions made by Andelin about the nature of women and their roles in society are congruent with the doctrinal concepts espoused by the church. Furthermore, "many women of the church across the country have organized themselves into study groups to read and discuss it."[4] In ten years the book has gone through fourteen editions.

Helen Andelin is described on the jacket of her book as "a feminine, home-centered wife" and mother of eight children. Her "experience was gained by teaching marriage classes to the women of her community. The success of these classes provided the impetus for her to write [the] book." She has also established the Fascinating Womanhood Foundation in Santa Barbara, California, to sponsor classes in various parts of the country. The inspiration for the teachings of the book was, she tells us, "a series of booklets published in the 1920's, entitled The Secrets of Fascinating Womanhood. These booklets have long been out of print and the authors unknown." Research has not uncovered these booklets, but their emergence in the twenties, a period of increasing freedom for women, was significant. The Victorian Era provided few options for women--marriage, domestic labor, school teaching, spinsterhood, or prostitution--and for the women of polygamous Utah the pressure to marry and produce great numbers of children was especially great.[5] The end of polygamy, which was not fully accomplished until after 1904, lessened this pressure--all women would not marry, and a married women need not fear that she might, with little or no notice, be replaced. This psychological freedom, coupled with women's growing economic strength and the "permissive and laissez-faire morality"[6] of the 1920's, must indeed have occasioned the writing of pamphlets telling women how to be more feminine, chaste and docile.

So in the sixties, a similar era of rapid social change, the situation again demanded an articulation of the correct behavior for women. Andelin's book was a direct reaction to the growing dissatisfaction of women in this country; she writes, "never before in history has there been a generation of women so disillusioned, disappointed, and unhappy in marriage as in our times" (p. 5). Here she recognizes the symptoms researched in Jessie Bernard's book, The Future of Marriage, published in 1972. Married women in America are less healthy and happy than their husbands and their unmarried counterparts. Andelin, although perceiving the same symptoms, prescribes a treatment diametrically opposed to that of Jessie Bernard; she takes the role of the traditional psychiatrist--similar to that described by Phyllis Chesler in Women and Madness--who "adjusts" the "sick" woman to her marriage rather than adjusting the sick marriage to the woman.[7] Out of the same situation that generated a new feminism,[8] there also emerged a heightened restatement of woman's "natural" needs, desires, and functions. These two arose as opposing solutions, each polarizing the adversary.

The second major Mormon work on women to emerge from the last decade, Woman and the Priesthood, was published in 1972 by Rodney Turner. This book is a more direct, articulate answer to the Women's Movement. Evidently, during the seventies the rhetoric of the feminist movement has become threatening enough to warrant a full-length work by a church scholar, and, significantly, by a male church scholar. A former Chairman of the Department of Theology at Brigham Young University, Turner has spent sixteen years on the religious faculty, has lectured throughout the United States, and is currently a professor of church history and doctrine. His writings have appeared in auxilliary lesson manuals used in teaching church classes, as well as in The Instructor, The Improvement Era, The New Era, and The Ensign--all church magazines.

Though Woman and the Priesthood is not an official pronouncement by the church--that is, it does not have divine inspiration nor is it the result of direct revelation--it is held in more public respect by both men and women in the church than Fascinating Womanhood. It speaks to a somewhat different audience than Fascinating Womanhood; while Andelin is talking to women, both within and outside the church, who are dissatisfied with their marriage, who are coming "face to face with the realization that they are not fulfilled" (p. 150), Turner is writing for men and women within the church who want a definitive explanation of woman's relationships to man, to the church, and to God. In Woman and the Priesthood, Turner discusses the importance of the family, the nature of man and woman, marriage, modesty, virtue, motherhood, birth control, and the relationship of women and the priesthood. Employing both scientific information and scripture, he concludes that the "Basic Laws of the Creator" apply "equally" to both sexes; that women who fulfill their "calling" may be as happy and successful as any man; that men and women can only be saved together as a fmily unit; and finally, that woman's "priesthood calling" is "wife, mother, teacher, comforter."

Turner decries the feminist movement as "anti-woman" (p. 27) and originating "in Satan's campaign to destroy the family" (Preface). Carefully stressing positive qualities such as "gentleness" and "purity" instead of the more negative qualities attributed to women in the nineteenth century like "weakness" and "childishness," he establishes himself as "pro-woman." Women, he tells us, have never been shown the respect, protection, guidance or love they both need and deserve. The are the "betrayed sex." He continues, paternally warning us that "unfortunately many modern women are compounding their plight by betraying themselves in new and more damaging ways" (p. 45).

Turner's basic technique is to assert woman's "equality" while arriving at a conclusion of "separate but equal":

> Man and woman originate in God. Whatever their differences, the sexes are biologically, psychologically, and spiritually bone of one another's bone and flesh of one another's flesh. They develop out of a shared beginning. Even as a fetus establishes its species before it reveals its gender, so are men and women human before they are masculine and feminine. Like branches of a tree, they emerge from a common trunk. In doing so, they remain together even as they grow apart in their individual quests for fulfillment. (p. 15)

And thus, throughout the book, Turner carefully establishes his case in modern, sometimes scientific language, while defining a limited, traditional sphere for woman. Using this technique he establishes a definite separation of traits in the male and female: "As with hormones, those qualities which are dominant in one sex are designed to be recessive in the other. In this way, each sex is distinguished by its chief characteristics" (p. 16). He goes on to state that "one's sexual nature determines one's eternal possibilities," and that most likely each individual's sex was determined in his or her preexistence.[9]

In Andelin one also finds a rigid differentiation of the sexes; she implies an eternal separation when she explains what to do about a misfit husband: "What if you fail to find any manly qualities in him? . . . Have faith that these qualities do exist in him even though they may not be showing . . . as they do in the souls of all men" (p. 60, italics added). She goes on to tell us, "when you become aware of your husband's masculinity you become aware of the many differences between the sexes. You become aware of your womanliness which is a thrilling sensation" (p. 63). Womanliness, according to Andelin, means supportiveness, cheerfulness, weakness, submissiveness and most of all, dependency--for she tells us a woman's deepest need is to be loved,[10] a man's to be admired. This emphasis on dependency suggests the readiness of Mormon theory to equate women with children.

One of the basic techniques that Andelin recommends for winning love from one's husband is to become "childlike." She warns women not to cry "full of emotion" for we may arouse guilt or fear in our husbands' she suggests that the "innocent, showy, heaving and sobbing of a child" (p. 188) is more effective. She tells us to "watch children . . . especially little girls who have been spoiled by too much loving. They are so trusting, so sincere, so innocent." Such a little girl may get "adorably angry at herself because her efforts to respond are impotent" (p. 180). This sauciness is "a means of preserving your human dignity. . . . You will no longer feel walked on when you respond in this manner" (p. 185). Since Andelin stresses making men feel masculine--"Remember: *You cannot become Angela Human and arouse a man's celestial love if you do not make him feel like a man*" (p. 65)--women must become incompetent and childlike so that *any* man can feel superior.

To understand how deeply the image of woman as child is engrained in the Mormon conception of the sexes, one must look both at the Mormon interpretation of Adam and Eve, and at the rationales for polygamy in nineteenth-century Utah. In Eden, we find no strumpet Eve, but rather "a little girl who, lacking experience, succumbs to the blandishments of a would-be molester" (Turner, p. 45). Adam, in contrast, is a fully conscious *adult*. We are told in a 1966 book of doctrinal interpretation, *A Study of the Articles of Faith*, by James E. Talmage, one of the twelve apostles of the church, that Adam

> found himself in a position that made it impossible for him to obey both the specific commandments given by the Lord. He and his wife had been commanded to multiply and replenish the earth. Adam had not yet fallen to the state of mortality, but Eve already had; and in such dissimilar conditions the two could not remain together, and therefore could not fulfill the divine requirements as to procreation . . . he *deliberately* and *wisely* decided to stand by the first and greater commandment by yielding to Eve's request. (p. 65, emphasis supplied)

Turner reaffirms this biblical interpretation, stating that Adam "willingly accompanied the woman into exile from the presence of the Lord" (p. 309). Thus Eve "incurred a debt of gratitude toward the Priesthood which she acknowledged by her humble acceptance of God's judgment upon her. . . . In honoring her husband as her temporal lord . . . [she placed] her womanly affections upon him alone" (p. 309). Thus woman exists in a perpetual minority, needing male protection and eternally grateful for Adam's "sacrifice."

Nineteenth-century defenders of polygamy like Orson Pratt answered the question, "Can a man love more than one wife?" by arguing that they love their wives as they love their children. A man "can love each one God gives with all his heart; and if he have a hundred, he can love them all with the same intensity that he could love one."[11] Since "man is endowed with polygamic qualities and woman with monogamic ones," as the editor of the Utah Magazine asserted in October of 1869, the question of whether a woman could love various husbands equally as she loves all of her children was evidently never raised. Women in contrast were expected to accept whatever attention they got from their husbands. Andelin echoes the polygamists when she states, "I would rather have 10% of a 100% man, than 100% of a 10% man" (p. 79).

Women's arrested development, according to the church, gave them a spiritual advantage: they are more likely candidates for salvation. Brigham Young writes that "they have not the sense to go far wrong. Men have more knowledge and more power; therefore, they can go more quickly and certainly to hell."[12] Because of her God-ordained dependency upon man, a woman "is not held accountable to the same degree that men are."[13] Woman, it seems, is capable of only a mediocrity of good and evil, and within this limited range of spiritual possibilities she needs primarily to be guided, protected, as a child. A vivid description of the polygamous wife's child-status was given by a visitor to Utah in 1867. "'They are very quiet and subdued in manner, with what appeared to be an unnatural calm; as if all dash, all sportiveness, all life had been preached out of them. They seldom smile except with a wan and wearied look.' Girls called father 'sir,' and women were brought into the room as children in England--curtsied, shook hands and left."[14]

The equation of women with children is the natural consequence of an ideology explicitly patriarchal. In the Mormon family,

> the father is [the] head . . . he is spokesman, or president, of the family group . . . there is no higher authority, in the view of the Mormon Church, in all matters relating to the family organization, than the father of that family, especially if he holds the higher priesthood. No one has the right to upset the father's authority. The Mormons teach that the patriarchal form of family government is of divine origin, and will retain its divine identity throughout eternity. . . . This tends to exalt the position of fatherhood, and to make a man what the church teaches that he is, the living image of God on earth.[15]

Woman's voice in the family is subdued. An assistant to the Council of Twelve wrote in 1965 of woman's role in the family, "Did God, however, in his infinite wisdom purposely make mother the family heart, blessing her with the subtle power to sway the head?"[16] The basic premise of Fascinating Womanhood is that women have no real power--and have no right to such autonomy. They must learn to use their femininity to gain power through their husbands. This manipulative use of femininity is precisely what many Mormons object to in the book. Most agree with the role assumptions, criticizing only the techniques resorted to.[17]

Andelin carries the superiority of the male to such an extreme that she blames women for male injustices. "An obnoxious man is often a true sign of a high caliber man that is not appreciated, not accepted, not given his freedom or in some way mistreated by his wife" (p. 47). "Often men's ugly and cruel actions are the woman's fault and are due to her lack of sympathetic understanding, her failure to appreciate and admire him, her inability to accept him at face value. . . . She can bring his ugly side to the surface" (p. 192). The wife, then, must listen, support and appreciate. "If you learn to listen to a man correctly it doesn't matter if the subject is interesting or dull. You may converse on world affairs, the atom bomb or the intricate details of his business career, and you will be able to maintain an interest." For "in his pleasure at having himself admired the man seldom notices that his conversation is not understood. . . . In fact, you can safely guess that if he deliberately talks over your head he is doing so only to arouse your admiration" (p. 59). A wife must never forget herself and make her husband insecure in his role. "Remember: in giving him advice, or in supporting him: Make Him Feel Superior As The Leader" (p. 97).

Andelin asserts that as long as a woman continues to live under her husband's roof, "his word should be law. This is neither harsh nor unfair. It is entirely a matter of law and order. The right to establish rules of conduct, use of the family car, expenditure of family funds, where the family spends its vacation, church attendance, which schools the children will attend are ultimately his to say" (p. 91). She warns women against being strong or decisive; it could result in "undue strain on her," or worse yet, damage her husband's ego. Turner, more sophisticated than Andelin, rejects the "unrighteous dominion" held by Victorian husbands over their wives (p. 72). He equates power with tyranny when secularly condoned, but approves it when authorized by God within the Priesthood of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, as a "stewardship" necessary to the salvation of women (p. 48).

The patriarchal concept of the priesthood is central in determining and reflecting Mormon assumptions about male-female roles. In the Mormon faith, each male adult is part of the hierarchy of the priesthood and the husband is held to be in more immediate contact with God than are women or non-Mormon men. From this personal connection with God the husband derives his right to rule over his wife. Alice Johnson Read wrote, after hearing a sermon by Brigham Young, "The principle is that a woman, be she ever so smart, cannot know more than her husband if he magnifies his priesthood. . . . God never in any age of the world endowed woman with knowledge above the man."[18] Thus the woman-girl is unequal in knowledge and excluded from gaining knowledge by the fact of her sex. Joseph Smith, who was a Mason before he founded the church, designated the priesthood as a male organization. From the Deacon of the Aaronic Priesthood to the High Priest of the Melchizedek Priesthood no ordination falls upon a woman. She may serve the church in various auxiliary capacities--in the Relief Society or by teaching Sunday School, Primary or MIA classes. But, as Turner tells us, the "nature and purpose of scripture dictates its male orientation. For its central theme is the salvation of mankind, and the chief responsibility for declaring it devolves upon men rather than women. This because man has been designated the direct and immeidate representative of the Lord on earth" (p. 284). We are further told:

> the responsibility for carrying out God's will is a male responsibility. Failure to do so is fundamentally a male failure. A woman's ability to faithfully serve the Lord depends upon the treatment she receives from her father, brothers, husband and other males. If they have been righteous in their conduct toward her, she is obliged to respond in kind. On the other hand, if they have betrayed their stewardships, she will be thrown into confusion and disorder. (p. 300)

Though it might seem that a women who is "thrown into confusion and disorder" should benefit from some direct link with God on her own accord, we are told by Turner that "woman being the weaker vessel should be under the constant *protection* and *guidance* of the priesthood" (p. 48, emphasis supplied), echoing here Andelin who calls the husband "Provider," "Protector," "Guide." According to Turner, a woman's father is her first guide, her husband the second, and in the event of the demise of both of these, a male relative or the bishop of her church. Joseph Weston in *These Amazing Mormons!* assures us that "the church has wisely freed women from the responsibilities of the priesthood, so that they may have freedom from the awesome and demanding responsibilities of its offices" (p. 74).

In answer to a query made in 1965 by a woman as to why women cannot hold the priesthood, one of the Twelve Apostles of the church stated, "when he whose business the priesthood is wants the sisters to hold it, he will let his prophet know."[19] In fact, John Read reported after listing to a sermon by Brigham Young that there would be a future time "when *men* would be sealed to men in the priesthood in a more solemn ordinance than that by which women were sealed to men, and in a room over that in which women were sealed to men in the temple of the Lord."[20] Women can in rare instances receive revelation and prophecy, though the records show that it is extremely unusual for God to bypass the "proper channels" of authority. A woman may "lay on with hands," annoint with oil and pray to heal the sick, but only in the absence of her husband or any other suitable priesthood holder, and only to other women and to children. For "'when women go around and declare that they have been set apart to administer to the sick . . . that is an assumption . . . contrary to scripture.'"[21] According to Turner, for a women to covet a man's priesthood is a sin. Black women are at a particular disadvantage since black males are excluded from holding the priesthood.

In Mormon theology the question is sometimes raised of a "heavenly mother." Orson Pratt said in 1852:

> But if we have a heavenly mother as well as a heavenly father, is it not right that we should worship the mother of our spirits as well as the father? No: for the father of our spirits is the head of his household, and his wives and children are required to yield the most perfect obedience to their great head. It is lawful for the children to worship the king of heaven, but not the queen of heaven.[22]

Turner warns us that "claims of females, such as the Virgin Mary, appearing from heaven with messages . . . are false. The voice of the priesthood is a male voice: nowhere in all scripture is there record of any female being heard speaking in behalf of God. The Lord does not send women to do the work of men" (p. 285). God sends male messengers to male prophets, who in turn reveal the knowledge of such revelations to male holders of the priesthood. The Godhead itself is composed of three male deities--the Holy Ghost, an "unembodied spirit man," God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. The God of the Judeo-Christian tradition is definitely male, but the Mormons have extended this tradition to stress the theomorphic nature of man. "As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become."[23]

In Mormonism, the human body is believed to be divine, to be each individual's "tabernacle" which should be cared for (thus the abstinence from coffee, tea, alcohol and tobacco) and which will be resurrected after death. Marriage will be eternal for those who receive the rites of the church and live faithfully enough to be reunited after death with their wives, husbands, children, brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers. This acceptance of the body, of sex (within marriage), of pregnancy and birth was an advance for women over the tirades of early Christian writers, who denounced the female body as lewd, dangerous, the tool of the devil. Because of the importance placed by Mormons on providing the vast numbers of waiting spirits with bodies, woman has been, to a degree, exalted. But each woman must remain dependent on her husband's priesthood for her salvation. Cleon Skousen recognized this when he wrote in *The First 2000 Years*, "through motherhood women acquire a superior position of influence over each rising generation. *This could completely eclipse the influence of their husbands* [so] our Heavenly Father placed them under the *presidency* of their husbands to preserve a *proper balance of power*" (p. 60, emphasis supplied). Thus while Mormon women are freed frym the mysogeny of the priests of the Roman Church--actually championed for fulfilling their reproductive nature--each woman is placed under the direct control of the male priesthood in the form of her husband. Masculine domination must be maintained.

Not surprisingly, Mormonism has idealized motherhood. Mormon women, according to Andelin, think of all else as secondary to this main purpose of their life.[24] A sentence from the *Discourses* of Brigham Young shows why: "Indeed a women who would sacrifice the greatest of all earth possessions, that of motherhood, which is hers by right of sex, for the silly reason of proving that she can do a man's work as well as any man, or for any other reason, is something less than a true woman, and is to be pitied as well as condemned."[25]

This condemnation served a practical as well as spiritual purpose; in pioneer Utah there was a call to settle a new land as well as save souls; large familes were advantageous for both purposes. Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, the major female defender of polygamy, wrote, "Our children are considered stars in a mother's crown, and the more there are, if righteous, the more glory they will add to her and their father's kingdom."[26] Sterility was considered a disgrace; a woman without children might even *ask* her husband to take a second wife and then take some of the other woman's children to raise as her own. Great rivalry existed between wives as to the numbers of children they bore, as all children added to the husband's status and power in the hereafter as well as on earth. According to Kimball Young, "while some women may have tried to keep from getting pregnant too soon after childbirth, any extensive period of time between births--say anything beyond a two-year span--was likely to lead to shaking of heads and considerable gossip" (pp. 189-190). With indifference to the impact of such social expectations, Turner postulates a "child-hunger" natural to all women. The child, of course, should be male. Here is Brigham Young:

> Sisters, do you wish to make yourselves happy? Then what is your duty? It is for you to bear children. . . . Do you look forward to that? Or are you tormenting yourselves by thinking that your husbands do not love you? I would not care whether

> they loved a particle or not; but I would cry out like one of old . . . 'I have got a man from the lord!' 'Hallelujah! I am a mother--I have borne an image of God!'"[27]

In the Mormon Church, the belief in a preexisting soul has further exaggerated the idealization of motherhood and the demand for reproduction. Souls are waiting to be born; therefore it is against the will of God not to produce as many children as possible. Women are taught to feel guilty, not only for killing the unborn fetus, but also for not conceiving preexisting unborn children. Thus even abstinence can be viewed as contrary to the will of God.

Given this background, it is not surprising that neither Turner nor Andelin are exactly advocates of birth control--even with the advent of the "population explosion." Andelin ignores the subject. Turner devotes two chapters to it. Though birth control is not officially banned by the church (in fact there exists a wide range of varying opinion among the members of the church), the First Presidency of the Church said on April 14, 1969, "the Lord may permit a practice he does not condone" (Turner, p. 219). Turner is harsher; he terms birth control "race suicide." "Contraception and abortion are sweeping across the world like a plague out of the dark ages" (p. 205). The earth, he explains, cannot be overpopulated because "there is a fixed number of spirits destined for embodiment on this planet" (p. 201). In fact, each couple has an allotment, and they will be heartbroken in the hereafter upon discovering that they have denied spirits alloted to them. The poverty of the world's people is due, not to overpopulation, but rather to Satan, the great "spoiler," who has made mankind refuse to share the wealth of the earth. Turner reason, "If with His knowledge of the future, the Father is not afraid to send his children into this world, and they are not afraid to come, why should we fear" (p. 225). Women practicing birth control, he charges, are "motivated by selfishness, ignorance and fear" (p.195).

Women, then, belong in the home, reproducing. Other kinds of work are discouraged. I remember when my own mother went back to work; several members of the bishopric of our ward paid her a call, telling her that her children (who were twelve, sixteen, seventeen and twenty-five) "needed her." Turner bemoans women's "turning to the 'city of men.'" In his opinion working for "sheer survival" is justified, but many women are working who are not "victims of unrighteous social conditions." They are motivated by purely selfish reasons--materialism, dislike of childibrth, or "the desire to gratify some ambition" or "to exploit a presumed talent" (pp. 25-26). "The political and social emancipation of women is due," he tells us, " more to their growing economic independence than to any other single factor. . . . They are not unlike children who, finding themselves gainfully employed, promptly demand greater freedom" (p. 27). "Mother," he concludes, "belongs at home. . . . No amount of sophisticated reasoning can free her of the obligation to be *available* whenever she is needed. And she is needed *when* whe is needed, not simply when she chooses to be available" (p. 293). He does not consider what *she* needs.

Helen Andelin, too, asserts that to work, for any reason other than to further a husband's education or career or in a "compelling emergency" will damage one's womanliness. Evidently Mrs. Andelin's work in her community, her writing of the book, her lecture tours and commitment to the Fascinating Womanhood Foundation do *not* interfere with her role as "helpmeet" to her husband, as is sadly the case with some wives. She warns us, "some housewives play too many roles outside the home. . . . It may be her own special activities . . . hobbies, clubs or public service organizations. . . . This is not to say that these things are not worthwhile when held within limits, but . . . they can cause her to be crowded for time to enjoy her housework" (p. 141).

The Mormon woman who fails to abide by such strictures risks not only social disapproval, but eternal damnation. As an article published in the church newspaper, the *Deseret News*, on July 22, 1857, said, "Women are made to be led, and counseled and directed. If they are not led and do not make their cables fast to the power and authority they are connected to, they will be damned."[27] Alfreda Eva Bell observed in 1855 in *The Mormon Wife, Life-Scenes in Utah*, "No woman can enter Heaven on her own merits --that is, without a man to take her there!" Helen Andelin echoes this sentiment, with her characteristic half-religious, half-secular vagueness: "There is one need which is fundamental, and it is for her to be loved and cherished by her man. Without this one ingredient she is unfulfilled. She may be a successful person in many ways, and happy to a degree, but inside there will be something missing. *She will not know heaven*" (p. 6, emphasis supplied). This is literally true for Mormon women. In Joseph Smith's elaborate fantasies of eons of time evolving endless worlds, with humans emerging as gods, the man is at the top. His wife or wives and children will serve to increase his glory; and those not married for "time and all eternity" in the Mormon temple may if lucky be allowed to serve as angels in hsi realsm. "For these angels did not abide by law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly without exaltation."[29]

Thus polygamy was justified as enabling *all* women to enter the highest degree of glory in the next life:

> Instead of the plurality of wives being a cause of sorrow to females, it is one of the greatest blessings of the last dispensation: it gives them the great privilege of being united

> to a righteous man . . . [who] stands forth as a patriarch, a prince, and a savior to his whole household. . . . What faithful, virtuous woman would not prefer to stand as the sixth or seventh wife of a good and faithful man, rather than to have no husband at all throughout the endless ages of eternity?[30]

Joseph Smith is repoted to have said in his proposal of marriage as a polygamous wife to Lucy Walker, a sixteen-year-old orphan girl who lived in his home at the time, "'I have no flattering words to offer. . . . It is a command of God to you. I will give you until tomorrow to decide this matter. If you reject this message the gate will be closed forever against you.'"[31] She prayed all night and in the morning consented to become his wife. So powerful was the threat of damnation, argues Stanley Hirshson, that "these women, not Smith and Young, established polygamy. They accepted the seemingly unacceptable because . . . they became convinced their salvation depended upon it. . . . These women were told that this grand order of marriage foreshadowed immortality, an argument that mastered them and chained them to an institution they despised" (p. 131).

Although Helen Andelin in Fascinating Womanhood never writes explicitly about the Mormon Church or the necessity of being united to the priesthood in order to achieve salvation, the marital relationship she espouses is close to the Mormon ideal. Woman should perpetually be the helpmeet of her husband. Turner, in Woman and the Priesthood, stresses the dependency of women less than the rhetoricians of the last century, and, to a certain extent, less than Andelin, but he still asserts man's "fundamental" role as leader. Women must submit to her husband in "this patriarchal order" to gain the "perfect union . . . of hearts, minds and glories" (p. 311) experienced in the presence of God.

Women, in the church, are afraid of the "Women's Liberation Movement." Though individual women frequently raise some of the issues encompassed by the movement, these issues are not identified with "Women's Liberation." A woman may talk about needing to be more than a mother and housewife, but not perceive her sentiments as feminist in content. Mormons have a strong sense of community, in part produced by the early persecution of the church; outsiders are often viewed as threats, and currents contrary to those of the church are viewed as the work of thedevil trying to confuse and corrupt the faithful, the "chosen" people of God. The church has crystallized the role of nineteenth-century women into dogma. Challenges to this dogma provide the church with a prime source for delusions of persecution. So we hear N. Eldon Tanner, first counselor to the President, saying, "Satan and his cohorts are using scientific arguments and nefarious propaganda to lure women away from their primary responsibilities as wives, mothers and homemakers."[32] In Women and the Priesthood we are likewise warned of "Satan's campaign to destroy the family of God" (Preface). "The false prophet has been joined by the false prophetess. Strident female voices now proclaim the emancipation of woman from her womanhood" (p. 20).

Both Andelin and Turner deal with dissent by labeling any deviation from traditional roles as "sick," "unnatural." Turner warns that in "becoming conditioned to non-masculine and non-feminine roles . . . recessive qualities inherent in each sex assume a kind of perverse dominance and like some cancer of the emotions, destroy the very being they were meant to temper and enhance" (p. 25). Turner concludes that "if women are not the gentler, purer sex, it is because they have altered that nature with which the Creator endowed them in the beginning" (p. 18). In a similar vein Andelin warns, "Remember that by nature you are not capable. If you have any masculine capabilities, you have acquired them unnaturally. God did not create women for the strenuous masculine responsibilities" (p. 170, emphasis supplied).[33] Andelin cautions that a woman lacking in femininity "may even be repulsive to men" (p. 155). While Turner agrees that "women are fully justified in denouncing male exploitation," he also threatens that "to insist upon being accepted as neuter persons rather than female persons, is to expose themselves to even more pernicious forms of male exploitation in the future" (p. 29), though he gives no hint as to what these ingenious forms of exploitation will be.

Although no detailed critique of Fascinating Womanhood has been published, more has been written in response to Andelin's book than about Woman and the Priesthood, which was published very recently and thus has had more limited exposure. Testimonials such as Gail Monson's in the Fresno Bee (May 17, 1973) attest to the success of Mrs. Andelin's techniques. "I am so grateful God set our family right. I am so thankful for theclasses and the lessons they taught me" (p. C4). In her book Andelin includes "success stories," anecdotes demonstrating the rewards of attaining fascinating womanhood. One woman testifies:

> I believe most women have a crisis in their life, or reach a point when they come face to face with the realization that they are not fulfilled . . . I was seeking for the true purpose of woman. Was it just to bear children and do the never ending housework? . . . I couldn't convince myself that this inferior role was my lot in life. Fascinating Womanhood has taught me the heavenly possibilities which are in store for women. (p. 150)

In the Summer 1967 issue of Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon

Thought, there appeared two negative responses to Andelin. The first, a poem by Mary Bradford, of Arlington, Virginia, entitled "After Reading Fascinating Womanhood," reads in part:

> Women should be kept under wraps
> Safe in a cozy cocoon,
> Regulated by phases of the moon
> . . . .
> Above all, let us join forces
> With the speed of wild horses
>
> To keep them from writing books![34]

The second article published in the same issue of Dialogue is a review of Fascinating Womanhood by Moana Bennett.[35] She criticizes the indiscriminate use of words like "celestial" "without regard for . . . scriptural implications," inappropriate literary allusions, the one-sided approach to marital problems, and uncritical acceptance and manipulation of one's husband.

I interviewed people who had read both of the books in order to get an estimation of what impact they have had. Since I have been unable to find any printed reaction to Woman and the Priesthood, the only information I have about Turner's reception is informal. I found only one non-Mormon woman who had read Fascinating Womanhood; although she expressed sympathy with the Women's Movement, she said of Andelin's book that "mostly it was just common sense." I found no one not affiliated with the church who had read Turner's book. The Mormons I have talked to who have read Turner all have more favorable reactions to him than to Andelin. One woman thought Turner explained "how your calling is as important as the Priesthood." Another said "Just because women don't have the priesthood doesn't mean they aren't equal to men."

Most of the dissatisfaction expressed about Fascinating Womanhood centered upon the techniques of manipulation and dishonesty between husband and wife. The less a particular woman felt need for change in her marriage, the less interest she expressed in the book and the more critical she became of the game-playing Andelin espouses. All of the church members I interviewed except one woman agreed with the basic assumptions of both books. Fewer people had read Woman and the Priesthood since it has only been available a short time. Men were most emphatically in agreement with Turner and with the role assumptions of Andelin. Women often expressed some doubts: "I didn't like the concept of being 'stuck in the role of a child, not able to talk to men like an adult.'" "What if you don't have somebody to depend on? . . ." "It created conflict in me; I can't let my husband be a dictator." "I resent a man figuring it all out for you." But on the whole, the women were in agreement with the men. "I kind of think a woman should be a woman, should be dependent," "In the Celestial outlook, without the priesthood, where would we be?"

The recently initiated debate within the church will undoubtedly intensify during the next few years. But, most probably, this debate will be directed outwards rather than existing as a dialogue within the church. Change may occur within the church as greater American culture comes to accept the equality of women, but any fundamental change in the church would appear to be impossible, as the assumptions about women's dependence upon men are intrinsic to Mormon theology. Individuals within the church who dissent will be ostracized and those who remain quietly within the church while accepting woman's full humanity will do so with inner conflict.

NOTES

[1] There was resistance to polygamy; we are told that there was an "incessant whining" in the territory of Utah, but public opposition was rare. Some wives left their husbands in protest, though they frequently left the Church at the same time. Fawn M. Brodie in No Man Knows My History (New York, 1946) asserts that Emma Smith "worked quietly against polygamy among the women in Navoo. 'Your husbands are going to take more wives,' she warned, 'unless you consent to it, you must put your foot down and keep it there!'" (p. 343). Kimball Young in Isn't One Wife Enough? (New York, 1954) records several instances of women's showing strength under polygamy even though cultural, religious, and economic pressures were against them. One woman, whose husband never took plural wives, reported: "'I told him . . . that if he ever took another wife, when he brought her in the front door I would go out the back. And when I told his mother what I said she told me, "If I had only a quilt, you would be welcome to half of it when you left him"'" (p. 123). Another incident cited by Young occurred in one of the families of a man who kept his plural wives in widely scattered communities providing scant support but plenty of babies in this particular household. The father had "returned unexpectedly after weeks of absence. That evening when he prepared to retire" with her mother, the oldest daughter, then sixteen years old, "stood in the doorway leading to the bedroom and said, 'No, father, you can't sleep with mother; you'll have to sleep in the barn. There are enough mouths to feed in this family without having any money'" (pp. 247-248).

[2] Thus the public criticism of polygamy voiced by Ann Eliza Webb Young, the twenty-seventh wife of Brigham Young, was virtually simultaneous with her renunciation of the Church; she could not remain within the Church and criticize Church practices.

[3] Helen B. Andelin, Fascinating Womanhood (Santa Barbara, 1972).

[4] Moana Bennett, "A Help Meet For Man," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, 2 (Summer 1967), 123.

[5] "Nearly all of the older polygamous women mentioned the 'old maid' with utter contempt. One said to me, "My husband married Edith Swenson but then she was an old maid'" (K. Young, p. 140).

[6] Rodney Turner, *Woman and the Priesthood* (Salt Lake City, 1972), p. 199.

[7] For a discussion on the dangers of role inversion "from the point of view of Mormon psychiatrists" see C. Jess Grossbeck, M.D., "Psychosexual Identity and the Marriage Relationship," *Dialogue*, 2 (Spring 1967), 130-135.

[8] Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* was also published in 1963.

[9] In the Mormon faith all people supposedly existed in a spiritual realm before birth, but upon birth all memory of this former existence is erased.

[10] A woman must be patient, however, when her husband's love is meager, for "man's first obligation in life is to *provide* for his wife and children. . . . From a practical standpoint it is impossible to place her first, and she has no right to expect it" (Andelin, p. 120).

[11] Quoted in K. Young, p. 48.

[12] Stanley P. Hirshson, *The Lion of the Lord* (New York, 1969), p. 131.

[13] George Q. Cannon, *Journal of Discourses*, 13:207, as quoted in Turner, p. 216.

[14] Hirshson, p. 132.

[15] Joseph H. Weston, *These Amazing Mormons!* (1948), p. 73.

[16] William J. Critchlow, Jr., "Women and the Priesthood," *The Improvement Era* (December 1965), p. 1120.

[17] I have encountered such reactions as: "doing the right thing for the wrong reasons," "manipulative," "game-playing," "the deviousness bothered me," "I resent the implication that women have to manipulate men." Few, however, questioned Andelin's assumptions about the proper female roles.

[18] K. Young, p. 280.

[19] Critchlow, p. 1120.

[20] K. Young, p. 280.

[21] Werner, p. 280.

[22] K. Young, p. 38.

[23] Ibid., p. 30.

[24] Andelin's book, in part, is a reaction against this child-centeredness; she warns women not to arouse their husband's jealousy by appearing to be too fond of their children.

[25] As quoted in Weston, p. 74.

[26] As quoted in K. Young, p. 53.

[27] Ibid., p. 174.

[28] Hirshson, p. 131.

[29] James E. Talmage, A Study of the Articles of Faith (Salt Lake City, 1966), p. 445.

[30] K. Young, p. 44.

[31] Austin and Alta Fife, The Saints of Sage and Saddle: Folklore Among the Mormons (Bloomington, 1956), p. 31.

[32] Anonymous, "Mormon Says Devil Aids Women's Lib," Eureka Times Standard, October 11, 1973, p. 18.

[33] An ironical statement, since "the ideal Mormon wife (in pioneer Utah] was one who could sustain herself and family largely by her own toil" (Fife, p. 257).

[34] Mary Bradford, "After Reading Fascinating Womanhood," Dialogue, 2, no. 2 (Summer 1967), 11.

[35] Bennett, pp. 122-125.

VALERIE STRUBLE

Mary Louise Briscoe
Literary and Social Views of Women

University of Pittsburgh
Winter 1974

WOMEN IN SPORTS REPORTING

Introduction

Women who plan on becoming sportswriters are faced with a two-fold problem. First, women are frequently discriminated against in journalism, finding it hard to get actual writing jobs:

> College educated women are employed as secretaries, copyreaders, newsmarkers, and checkers. Called "training jobs," they encompass a wide range of lower category positions known as "Women's jobs," and they are usually accepted in the understanding that they are temporary and will lead directly to writing and reporting positions. After a year or more, they might lead to researchers. This analysis is easily documented with facts--the girl clipping newspapers for a year who has just published a book; the Radcliffe-educated secretary with six years' experience in editing and layout; the researcher on another Time Inc., magazine with a journalism degree, five years' previous experience on three newspapers as a reporter and writer, first hired by Time Inc., as a typist and after six years, still a researcher.[1]

And, secondly, women are, in our society, discouraged from participation in sports, though such participation is deemed "essential to developing ability to answer questions from viewpoints of players."[2] Thus, the struggles of women in sports journalism reflect with particular clarity the problems that women face in seeking both equal opportunity in employment and liberation from rigidly defined sex roles.

This paper will deal with these problems in three sections: "Women in Journalism--It's Hard to Be a Brenda Starr"; "Women and

Sports--'Sports May Be Good for People, but They Are Considered a Lot Gooder for Male People than Female People'";[3] and "Women and Sportswriting."

Women in Journalism--It's Hard to Be a Brenda Starr

In Dale Messick's comic strip, Brenda Starr is constantly tracking down smugglers, covering the mayor's office for the *Flash*, or gathering facts on a murder suspect. In real life, women journalists generally track down devil's food recipes, cover county beauty pageants, and spend hours in a library researching murder cases they'll never write about. Although the supply of women journalists is great (44% of the journalism school students in the United States in 1971 were women),[4] newspapers and magazines usually prefer men.

Women are not hired for a variety of "reasons," the most popular being the myth that too many women leave their jobs to marry before they have repaid their training. One woman job seeker countered this myth by showing that far more men had left their reportorial jobs on the paper in recent years than women. No matter. She was not hired. The editor turned her down with another myth: the distractions women supposedly cause on a news staff. She writes ironically of her interview:

> Other men apparently can make it through the day without raping their secretaries, but the virility of newspaper men is such that temptation has to be kept out of reach.[5]

A more subtle deterrent involves the amount of experience a woman is able to get before applying for a writing job. Because of the "heavy work" involved in the copyboy job, for example, women are often bypassed for this traditional first step on the ladder. And, because the experiences of a copyboy (yes, copy*boy*) are construed as valuable training for a reporter, women who have missed this apprenticeship are less likely to get a reporting job.[6]

As a result of these obstacles, the percentages of women journalists on newspapers and news services is dismal, as the following chart indicates:[7]

Publication	Total Staff	Number of Women
Associated Press	1050	112
United Press International	900	81
New York *Times*	626	64
Washington *Post*	385	70
St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*	206	23
Chicago *Tribune*	373	52
Los Angeles *Times*	417	50

And those women who work on these staffs do not in the least resemble the fictional Brenda Starr:

> As they do on many newspapers, all but a handful of the Los Angeles *Times* women work for feature sections and the paper's six women editors are all assigned to women's news, food, fashion, or television.[8]

The vast majority of women who do not cover such subjects work for weeklies and small dailies, the low-paying media that men can bypass. There are exceptions to the rule, of course, and some women have pushed on to better jobs and more diverse assignments with highly respectable publications. Helen Thomas of U.P.I., for example, was first assigned to the East Wing of the White House. Her duties included covering the First Lady, the President's family, and various state dinners and parties. But a happy ending:

> After spending a couple of years telephoning President Kennedy's press spokesman, Pierre Salinger, to inquire about Caroline's ailing pet hamster, she was permitted to cover "hard news."[9]

Another way to get to the "big" news is to look for newsworthy angles while covering luncheons, buffets, or balls at the mayor's residence.

Many women, then, cannot get assignments that are not, as one woman put it almost forty years ago, "principally mush and skimmed milk with a little cream and powdered sugar added upon occasion."[10] And others who do get jobs off the women's pages often find the going rouch. Abbey Johnson of the LaPorte (Ind.) *Herald-Argus*, for instance, worked for two years after graduating from journalism school reviewing movies for a religious publication. On her new job she finally got to cover a big story when she was kidnapped at rifle-point by a man she had refused to marry. She talked him out of killing himself and into surrendering, but understandably was too shaken to write the story when she returned to the city room; a male co-worker got the assignment. The *Newsweek* story on Ms. Johnson's kidnapping suggests by its very tone the devastating condescension women reporters must confront. The story begins, "Abby Johnson is a 22-year old blonc with blue eyes and big ambitions," and ends by quietly gloating over her failure to make copy out of her shocking experience.[11]

Sally Joy of the Boston *Post* temporarily covered the major news events of 1885, but, apparently because she felt out of place in a male-dominated area, she soon quit her reporter's job to become Penelope Penfeather, the *Post*'s society columnist. She had returned to the realm of the female; society reporting was "okay" for women.[12]

The women who do manage to obtain reportorial assignments and who can cope with the pressures of the macho world of journalism still have hurdles to contend with when hoping to specialize in sports.

Women and Sports--"Sports May Be Good for People, but They Are Considered A Lot Gooder for Male People than Female People

In 1973 Charles Schultz's Peanuts gave us Thibault, a sulking male chauvinist who mouthed platitudes about how baseball is a boys' game and how girls should learn their proper place. Marcie settles the matter on Thibault's level, with a belt across the chops.[13] But slugging the people who stand in the way will not resolve the problem as it does for Marcie. Sports are still a male preserve. The stereotypical athlete has always been male, and even though the United States' women ski team has won eleven Olympic medals, as opposed to two for the men's team, it is the men who are sought for commercials selling ski products, for movies about downhill racing, for instructors' jobs, and for positions on the boards of ski companies. The male athletic image sells--the female "jock" image does not.[14]

As well as assuming that the world of sports is masculine, society has supposed that women are naturally ignorant when it comes to sports. This assumption emerges in the patronizing advice nd oversimplified explanations in women's magazines. "One cannot expect a girl to appreciate the intricacies of each and every sport, but she certainly shouldn't flaunt her ignorance," condescends a writer for Seventeen.[15] And a survival guide to football in McCall's, explicitly "for women only," assumes that it must make analogies to things a woman understands, like explaining that asking, "Who's playing?" is comparable to asking, "Who stars in 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf'?"[16] Even if women successfully bet on teams, they are presumably betting emotionally rather than from knowledge of the teams involved. If Grandma, for instance, picks the Giants as 5-2 favorites over the Vikings, most men attribute her choice to the fact that the Giant fullback has five kids and the Viking fullback only has two.[17] Mingled with a little "feminine intuition," a woman's emotions can, according to the men, pick a winner and still remain unqualified to do so.

Supposedly women's "ignorance" of sports is the result of a disinclination to athletics natural in the female sex: the woman learning the rules of football is merely trying to share her husband's Sunday afternoons, not genuinely seeking out facts to enjoy the game. According to one male writer, a girl is likely to "mistake a date to a sporting event as an occasion to make herself obnoxious"[18] by commenting on other women's clothes, talking to her neighbors, and complaining if her hair is mussed.

In fact, many women lack the knowledge and interest in sports so endemic in the American male. But that characteristic is hardly innate. Women are uninformed about sports, since from childhood on they are discouraged from participating in athletics. The extent to which girls are conditioned against participation in sports is now a subject of complaint even in nonmilitant women's magazines like Redbook. A recent article pointed out that little girls are raised with the fear of getting hurt, the fear of getting muscles, the fear of losing, and the fear of winning and "beating a member of the male sex."[19] And they are raised knowing that the girl who can explain sports to boys is "repugnant."[20] Very few men can tolerate women's telling them about hat tricks, the illegal movements of the pivot foot, or the infield fly rule.

Women who ignore the scorn of society by competing in sports are labeled unfeminine--unless they take elaborate precautions. A nineteenth-century writer for Cosmopolitan advised a woman, while engaged in athletic conquests, to "take out a hand mirror and look at herself."[21] In 1936 writer Paul Gallico expressed even stronger sentiments: since it is "a lady's business to look beautiful, and there are hardly any sports in which she seems able to do it," he wrote, she should get out of sports. "Cuties," he asserts, "should never, never go all out so that they breathe audibly and get mustaches of perspiration."[22] Horrors. That women should sweat?

And then there's the worn assumption that all women athletes are lesbians. To counter that suspicion, women baseball players (who flourished in a league established while the male players were occupied with World War II) were drilled on how to apply make-up and dress like a lady. Their fears were not unfounded. Male sportswriters still refer to the Ladies Professional Golf Association tournaments as "the dyke opens."[23]

Perhaps the major argument used to discourage athletic competition for women is that they are physically and emotionally unsuited for participation. But the tone of the argument--one of ridicule and contempt--is even more devastating than its substance. Here is Gallico:

> The girl has not yet been built who can run attractively--girls do something funny with their feet, or their knees go the wrong way. And the hippity-skippity sort of jig they do from side to side to cover court (tennis) is just about as elegant as a giraffe in a great hurry.[24]

Few women want to run the risk of incurring such withering scorn. And Title IX and Billie Jean King notwithstanding, the attitude of men--at least of male sportswriters (who presumably know their audience's disposition)--has changed little. Jim Murray of the Los Angeles Times (August 30, 1974) still finds the presence of women in this male preserve a source of comedy. About a woman racedriver, veteran of over 100 races, he chortles:

> Something new has been added--lipstick. A driver will be looking in the rear-view mirror to check eye shadow instead of car shadow. Mingling with the odor of gasoline or methanol will be Chanel No. 5. . . . It's like seeing Sophia Loren driving a truck, Gina Lollobrigida on a lube rack. . . . I caught up with this intruder in the domain of Barney Oldfield, Ray Harroun and the Unser brothers this week. "What's a nice girl like you doing in a car without a top on it and without even a glove compartment?" I frowned. (iii, p. 1)

And so on, ad nauseum.

But the fact is that girls, until very recently barred from Little Leagues and similar competitions on the basis of physical inability, are equally well coordinated and as efficient in motor tasks as boys.[25] Excluded from sports as children, most women mature with an understandable indifference to the world that ignores them and mocks them if they attempt to enter.

Women who do maintain their athletic activity are faced with little or no funds to support them while in school. The following example is typical:

> In 1969 a Syracuse, New York, school board budgeted $90,000 for extracurricular sports for boys; $200 was set aside for girls. In 1970 the board cut back on the athletic budget, trimming the boys' program to $87,000. Funds for the girls' interscholastic program were simply eliminated.[26]

Bear Bryant, the athletic director of the University of Alabama, has refused to allocate any funds for women's sports.[27] The story is the same all over the country.

Faced with limited funds and facilities, and the scorn of men and other women, most women have withdrawn from the realm of sports, preferring not to interfere in such a defensively male domain. The rigid sex-role stereotyping of our culture has made the woman in sports as risible a character as the male hairdresser, both having invaded the environs of the opposite sex.

Women in Sports Reporting*

Few women have become sportswriters by running the full obstacle course of discriminatory hurdles against women in journalism and in sports. Most women who have made it into the field have gotten there by a route other than expertise in sports--often on the basis of how well they will look on camera. Jane Chastain, for example, was working as a model when she answered a call for an audition at a television studio. She got the job of "Coach Friday," hired to read the sports stories and scores that others had written and compiled. Lee Arthur, similarly, worked as an actress and model in New York before trying for a sports position on WCBS television. Both women were hired as gimmicks; once they had the job, it was their responsibility to obtain on their own sufficient sports knowledge to maintain their positions. Not surprisingly, they had their problems. Lee Arthur, discharged from WNBC for confusing teams and scores, has definitely improved since her arrival at KDKA television. But, as she admits, she is still less than perfect. One of her recent slips occurred when she stated that "the Penguins are on their way to California to play the Black Hawks";[28] hockey fans know that the Blackhawks are from Chicago. Chauvinists use such errors to argue against women as sports reporters. But if the networks would (or could) hire women experienced in sports instead of in acting or modeling these boners would not occur. Obviously, there is a vicious cycle: few women encouraged to enter sports, few women eligible for visible, serious positions in the sports world, few women therefore encouraged to enter sports.

Jane Chastain has also improved upon her knowledge of sports, showing considerable expertise in her syndicated sports series. But many viewers object to her methods: she employs cutsey, "feminine" explanations of complicated plays. Her description of screening in basketball is typical:

> Jane does her demonstration--or part of it--in a supermarket. There she shows three or four women trying to get at the same bargain item up on a shelf. A couple of them screen each other out, and Jane jumps in there for the rebound--only in this case it's a can of soup, or something.[29]

---

*To obtain some personal accounts of what it is like to be a woman sports reporter, I sent a questionnaire (see below) to four reporters: Lee Arthur, Jane Chastain, Lynda Fillmore of the Waukegan (Ill.) News-Sun, and Sheila Moran of the New York Post. I received answers from only two, Lee Arthur and Jane Chastain, but these responses were so extensive that I decided to retain the use of the questionnaire. Jane Chastain sent nearly fifty pages of press releases and clippings from newspapers throughout the country. Lee Arthur returned a written set of responses.

Ms. Chastain, by these tactics, is perhaps attempting to simplify sports for her viewing audience. Unfortunately, her approach in such instances does nothing to scratch the myth that women can relate to sports only through domesticated analogies. Women in sports reporting, as in other fields, do not escape the pressures of social expectations. Regardless of how they got into the business, women sportswriters are faced with a variety of problems, including the fact that they are viewed as fair game by athletes who suspect they chose the job to be near eligible young men. Lynda Fillmore of the Waukegan (Ill.) News-Sun was not surprised (a bit annoyed, but not surprised) to find that Joe Pepitone of the Chicago Cubs had intended to do more than show her his trophies.[30] The gimmick method of hiring thus places women sports reporters in a double bind: they must be attractive, but their very good looks mean that they will not be taken seriously as professionals. It is hard to view Jane Chastain as one of the writers when her press releases usually include her measurements (35-22-35) and descriptions of her "long flowing, shoulder length hair."[31] And she faces another problem in the future: "as she gets older and probably better at sports journalism, she [may] find herself, unlike a man, less likely to get work."[32] Still another problem concerns the lack of previous female athletic reporters available to pattern themselves after. As Lee Arthur puts it, "It's so brand new; there are no 'role models' as in other fields."[33]

The most serious difficulties concern vital sportsnews areas which women are not allowed to enter:

> In 1969, syndicated sports columnist Elinor Kaine slapped a civil-rights suit on the New York Giants and the New York Jets after she was barred from the press box at an exhibition game. As a result, she got a seat--but in a tiny isolated box formerly used by newsreel photographers.[34]

Many women are still unable to go everywhere men can. Lee Arthur is allowed in the dugouts at Three Rivers Stadium, but cannot sit on the benches, enter locker rooms, or walk onto the playing field. Such limitations are an obvious hindrance, forcing the female journalist to enlist the aid of coaches or bat-boys to retrieve athletes to areas she can enter.

Besides cornering athletes, it is sometimes difficult for women sportswriters to get good assignments or persuade newsmakers to grant them an interview. Unless the woman works for a "name" publication or station, she frequently has trouble convincing her targets that the publicity she can offer them will be sufficient to warrant their time. Lee Arthur has little trouble getting stories, but she is convinced that is only because she works for KDKA, a most distinguished station.[35]

In addition to the difficulties a woman encounters while trying to write her story, the female sportswriter, like all women in journalism, is frequently paid less than men doing the same job:

> Except for the syndicated columnists, women reporters earn relatively little; the average is about $250 a week.[36]

The payscale for members of the American Newspaper Guild runs about $248 for beginners and $400 for experienced reporters.[37]

Ironically, women may be able to handle some aspects of their jobs better than men. Reporter Lindsay van Gelder finds the typically "female" traits an asset in journalism:

> I don't know a single woman journalist who has been handicapped by her sex once she did get the job. It's true that a lot of the traits required for reporting--aggressiveness, coolness under pressure, and self-reliance--are bred out of women in this society . . . in the long run, however, it's the stereotyped female traits that get the story . . . getting people to trust you--as opposed to shoving a microphone in their faces--is where responsible journalism is at today. You've got to have compassion, and all those other "female virtues."[38]

Similarly, Lee Arthur believes that men are reluctant to ask questions, afraid that they will appear ignorant; women, she contends, are "not involved in male ego contests."[39] As a result, she is learning more about sports than most men who are content to bluff their way through areas they do not understand.

Women, then, can be quite successful sports journalists. And no doubt their numbers will increase as the number of women in sports increases and the social stigma of being a woman athlete declines. Even now the masthead of *Sports Illustrated*, the foremost of the sports magazines, indicates that half of their reporter/writers are women, including Honor Fitzpatrick, the chief reporter. But when it comes to editorial positions, the story is the same old one: one female editor to fourteen men.

Considering the substantial number of difficulties that confront them, it is not surprising that so few women earn their pay and their reputations covering sports. A female journalist who has also participated in sports is very rare indeed. And many of the sexy-looking charmers hired by television stations to lure the attentions of a predominantly male audience lack, at least a first, the sports savvy to perform effectively.

In order to be a successful sports journalist, a women ideally must be part Brenda Starr and part Billie Jean King. She should not have to be part Miss America as well.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO WOMEN SPORTS WRITERS

1. What preparation did you have for your sports reporting career? Do you have a degree in journalism or did you take advantage of an available opportunity to enter this field? If you studied journalism, did you have sports journalism in mind?

2. Did you find that employers would rather hire you for women's pages than for sports?

3. Do you have trouble getting interviews with athletes, or are they sometimes granted because you are a woman? Do you have trouble getting good assignments?

4. On your sports staff, how many of the reporters are women? How large is the total staff?

5. Do men seem to think you became a sportswriter to make contact with eligible athletes?

6. Are your reports aimed at men, women, or a general audience?

7. Are you able to enter all press box areas that male reporters can? Are you ever allowed in locker rooms, dugouts, or on benches?

8. Is your salary comparable to your male counterpart's?

9. Have you ever competed in athletics?

10. Do athletes, coaches, officials, etc., readily accept you as a reporter/commentator?

11. Do you think that you, as a woman, have any qualities that enable you to better conduct interviews?

12. Do you have any other comments concerning the problems or pluses of sports reporting for women?

NOTES

[1] Helen Whitehead, "The News Weeklies and Women," *Mademoiselle* (September 1970), p. 36.

[2] Edward John Walsh, "The Preparation of Sportswriters," *Dissertation Abstracts*, 27 (1967), 3828-A.

[3] I borrowed the subtitle from Bil Gilbert and Nancy Williamson, "Sports Is Unfair to Woman," *Sports Illustrated* (May 28, 1973), p. 90.

[4] "Flight from Fluff," *Time* (March 20, 1972), p. 53.

[5] Lindsy Van Gelder, "The Trials of Lois Lane: Women in Journalism," in *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, ed. Robin Morgan (New York, 1970), p. 82.

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] "Flight," p. 53.

[8] *Ibid*.

[9] Connecticut Walker, "Reporter Helen Thomas--When a Woman Covers the White House," *Parade* (February 24, 1974), p. 6.

[10] Ishbel Ross, *Ladies of the Press* (New York, 1936), p. 21.

[11] "The Women," *Newsweek* (December 20, 1954), p. 76.

[12] Ross, p. 21.

[13] Charles Schulz, *Peanuts*, July 31-August 3, 1973.

[14] Susan Edmiston, "The Gym Suit Blues: Changing the Odds Against Women in Sports," *Redbook* (January 1974), p. 126.

[15] Richard Hollander, "Boys Watching Girls Watching Games," *Seventeen* (January 1969), p. 103.

[16] Barbara Lang, "Instant Football, a Survival Guide for Women Only," McCall's (October 1967), p. 45.

[17] Joel Sayre, "Mother Knows Best on the Nicer Points of Football," Sports Illustrated (December 17, 1962), p. Em:3.

[18] Hollander, p. 103.

[19] Edmiston, p. 125.

[20] Hollander, p. 103.

[21] L. DelaRamee, "On the Art of Dress," Cosmopolitan (April 1897), p. 550.

[22] Paul Gallico, "Women in Sports Should Look Beautiful," Reader's Digest (August 1936), p. 12.

[23] Edmiston, p. 125.

[24] Gallico, p. 14.

[25] Edmiston, p. 124.

[26] Gilbert and Williamson, p. 90.

[27] Bill Currie, KDKA Television "Eyewitness News," Sports Commentary (March 18, 1974).

[28] Lee Arthur, response to Questionnaire.

[29] John Bibb, "Coach Friday Arrives," The Tennessian Sports (October 12, 1973), p. 35.

[30] "Just One of the Boys," Newsweek (July 3, 1972), p. 43.

[31] Bill Brill, "Woman Sportscaster: 'Coach Friday' Arrives," Roanoke Times (August 21, 1973), p. 16.

[32] Kay Bourne, "Sportslady Jane's 'Gimmick' Goes Nationwide," Bay State Banner (September 6, 1973), p. 6.

[33] Response to Questionnaire.

[34] Whitehead, p. 36.

[35] Response to Questionnaire.

[36] Winzola McLendon and Scottie Smith, "Don't Quote Me! How Washington Newswomen Get Their Scoops," Ladies Home Journal (November 1970), p. 90.

[37] Edwin Emery, The Press and America (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1954), p. 686.

[38] In Morgan, p. 83.

[39] Response to Questionnaire.

DEBORAH REICH

Eleanor M. Tilton
American Literature, 1630-1865

Barnard College
Winter 1971

MARGARET FULLER: A FORGOTTEN FEMINIST

Introduction

Margaret Fuller's essay called "The Great Lawsuit.--Man versus Men; Woman versus Women" appeared in The Dial of July, 1843. An expanded version called Woman in the Nineteenth Century was published in book form in February, 1845. After Fuller's death, a book called Women in the Nineteenth Century containing the 1845 essay and "kindred papers relating to the sphere, condition and duties, of woman" was put together by her brother Arthur and published in 1855. In studying her feminist thinking one must bear in mind that these "kindred papers"--some of which are excerpts from or reprints of her own work, and some excerpts from her journals, including entries in which the work of others is quoted--were not selected or arranged by Fuller herself. I have therefore concentrated my analysis on the principal essay, and have tried to draw on her other writing (whether from this volume or elsewhere) with appropriate caution.

The first section of this paper is an analysis of Fuller's feminist thinking, principally as presented in "Woman in the Nineteenth Century,"* followed by a sampling of the critical reaction at the time it was published and since.

---

*Since I used the 1855 text--which was not self-contained but rather was part of the larger book--and to avoid confusion, the principal essay will henceforth be referred to with quotation marks. Subsequent references are to the 1855 edition.

"Woman in the Nineteenth Century"

"Very early I knew that the only object in life was to grow," Margaret Fuller wrote once.[1] And once she confided to a friend, "I love best to be a women, but womanhood at present is too straitly bound to give me scope."[2] These two statements, taken together, are a succinct description of the making of a feminist. Fuller provided a broad definition of feminism--though she would not have used the term--in the preface to the 1845 edition of "Woman in the Nineteenth Century":

> While it is the destiny of Man, in the course of the ages, to ascertain and fulfil the law of his being, so that his life shall be seen, as a whole, to be that of an angel or messenger, the action of prejudices and passions which attend, in the day, the growth of the individual, is continually obstructing the holy work that is to make the earth a part of heaven. By Man I mean both man and woman; these are the two halves of one thought. I lay no especial stress on the welfare of either. I believe that the development of the one cannot be effected without that of the other. My highest wish is that this truth should be distinctly and rationally apprehended, and the conditions of life and freedom recognized as the same for the daughters and the sons of time; twin exponents of a divine thought. (Women, pp. 2-3)

Modern feminists might quibble over semantics, especially Fuller's acceptance of the masculine collective noun (though what other have we, unless we invent one?), and might reject the religious orientation, but otherwise it is a most eloquent statement of the noblest principles of feminism.

The theme of self-realization as the birthright of every individual recurs continually in "Woman in the Nineteenth Century." It begins with the epigraph, "Frailty, thy name is Woman," followed by "The Earth waits for her Queen," because women especially have been doomed to live lives of potential unrealized (p. 15). Fuller felt that men too are limited, but in a different way, because men themselves have set the limits on their own freedom--and on women's as well (p. 49).

Ambitious and gifted women like Fuller do not always become feminists. Overcoming obstacles set in her way and achieving personal success, the talented women sometimes insists that there is no reason why any other woman cannot do likewise. She does not see that the fact that an exceptional person will overcome all obstacles is not a good argument against removing arbitrary and unnecessary obstacles, whenever possible, from the path of others. Fuller insisted that everyone, of whatever scope her talents, has the right to develop them fully and should be encouraged to do so. That many women do not, she felt, is partly because self-dependence "is deprecated as a fault in most women. They are taught to learn their rule from without, not to unfold it from within," as she herself was taught as a child (pp. 38 ff.). On this point too she was emphatic. She wanted women to stop depending on men as guides, mentors, teachers, and to look inward for direction (p. 119). "God," she said in another essay, "is a sufficient guardian to those who dare rely on him" (p. 238).

Fuller was convinced that the time was ripe for a change for the better in the status of women, and furthermore that the change was destined to come in America. "This country," she said, is as surely destined to elucidate a great moral law, as Europe was to promote the mental culture of Man" (p. 25). She invoked the spirit of the Constitution on behalf of the cause with a subtle appeal to the American man's pride in country, remarking that

> as the principle of liberty is better understood, and more nobly interpreted, a broader protest is made in behalf of Woman. As men become aware that few men have had a fair chance, they are inclined to say that no women have had a fair chance. (p. 24)

She appealed to men's self-interest concerning the state of their souls, attempting to demonstrate that "improvement in the daughters will best aid in the reformation of the sons of this age" (pp. 23-24). She appealed to men's conscience as civilized beings in citing the abuses suffered by married women because they are without property rights, to things or even to their own bodies (pp. 31-32). She explained the necessity for a frank examination of such hitherto taboo subjects:

> I would not deal with "atrocious instances," except in the way of illustration, neither demand from men a partial redress in some one matter, but go to the root of the whole. If principles could be established, particulars would adjust themselves aright. (p. 32)

And in case invoking conscience and the Contitution were not sufficient, she appealed to men's much-cherished chivalry on the grounds that "it was Isabella who furnished Columbus with the means of coming hither. This land must pay back its debt to Woman . . ." (p. 65)! Fuller brought all her powers of persuasion to bear; apparently she was not unaware of what we would call the psychology of the male chauvinist. Everyone, she observed, "wishes to be lord in a little world, to be superior at least over one; and he does not feel strong enough to retain a life-long ascendancy over a strong nature" (p. 43).

As already noted, she demanded that these questions be dealt with directly and at their roots, not piecemeal or as isolated instances--a favorite tactic of opponents of any reform movement. In a review of essays by Anna Brownell Jameson, an English social reformer, Fuller catalogued some of the abuses suffered by women that Jameson had uncovered and challenged men either to fish or cut bait: if women cannot be independent, men had better take better care of them, or else admit them to full membership in the human race and grant them all the rights and privileges necessary to self-sufficiency (p. 293).

A religious element is clearly discernible in "Women in the Nineteenth Century"; indeed, it underlies the principal theme of self-realization to which she returned again and again. "Too much," she complained with a hint of bitterness,

> is said of women being better educated, that they may become better companions and mothers for men. . . . The intellect, no more than the sense of hearing, is to be cultivated merely that Woman may be a more valuable companion to Man, but because the Power who gave a power, by its mere existence signifies that it must be brought out toward perfection. (pp. 95-96)

She distinguished four classes or levels of marriage, of which the lowest is a utilitarian "household partnership" and the highest a "pilgrimage toward a common shrine." And in speaking of parenthood, she wrote:

> What deep communion, what real intercourse is implied in sharing the joys and cares of parentage, when any degree of equality is admitted between the parties! (p. 71)

Fuller defended one's right to remain single at least partly because of her exalted expectations of what relationships between women and men should be. "The sexes should not only correspond to and appreciate, but prophesy to one another," she wrote (p. 44). How rare, how unlikely that such an expectation would ever be fulfilled in this world! But the idea of remaining single by choice was much less common in Fuller's time than it is today, even for men; she noted that

> we cannot wonder at the aversion with which old bachelors and old maids have been regarded. Marriage is the natural means of forming a sphere, of taking root in the earth. . . . Those who have a more full experience of the instincts have a distrust as to whether the unmarried can be thoroughly human and humane. . . . (p. 96)

Today we would say that those who conform to traditional lifestyles feel threatened by those who do not; one has the feeling that Fuller was hovering on the periphery of this thought but was held back because the unmarried woman of her day rarely had (or admitted to having) a "more full experience of the instincts." The single woman of the last century was somewhat less threatening than her modern counterpart because she paid for her nonconformity--theoretically, at least--with celibacy. Yet even then there were notable exceptions, like George Sand. (One suspects that the Yankee milieu--from which Fuller did not escape until she got to New York at age thirty-four, and then to Europe, two years later--had its effect. While she did not vehemently condemn Sand's liaisons, neither did she approve them [e.g. p. 247]).

In any case, Fuller also defended the unmarried on purely practical grounds:

> The business of society has become so complex, that it could now scarcely be carried on without the presence of these despised auxiliaries; and detachments from the army of aunts and uncles are wanted to stop gaps in every hedge. (p. 97)

But above all, Fuller railed against the state of dependence which caused women to marry out of desperation, or to be married off by a father or brother with no say whatsoever in the matter. Any union that is not a "meeting of souls" seemed to her a profanation and an abomination, to which not marrying at all was far more preferable (pp. 70-71).

Another subject to which Fuller addressed herself at some length in "Woman in the Nineteenth Century" is the question of women's suffrage, although it was not her highest priority. To those who said that suffrage would cause women to neglect home and children, she answered that they would neglect them no more for politics than they already did for the occupations which men then conceded them--charitable and religious affairs and entertainment. And besides, "a house is no home unless it contains food and fire for the mind as well as for the body." This is the theme of individual development again; she continued: "For human beings are not so constituted that they can live without expansion. If they do not get it in one way, they must in another, or perish." To those who said that woman's proper means of influencing affairs of the world is through her influence on husband, brother, or father, she conceded (in one of those strange reversals which crop up now and then in this and other of her essays) that woman may be "destined by nature rather for the inner circle," but noted that circumstances very often cast her out on her own, and what then? (pp. 34-36).

She reminded those who said that a woman doesn't need to get involved in politics, because she can wield the pen and thus have an impact on affairs, that that route too was once thought inappropriate for a woman, adding,

> she is likely to draw, from a permission to plead her cause that way, opposite inferences to what might be wished by those who now grant it. (p. 34)

She argued vehemently that biology is no excuse to deny women suffrage, confronting men yet again with the fact of their hypocrisy:

> Those who think the physical circumstances of Woman would make a part in the affairs of national government unsuitable, are by no means those who think it impossible for negresses to endure field-work, even during pregnancy, or for sempstresses to go through their killing labors. (p. 35)

Finally, Fuller vigorously rejected the notion that a government of men can represent the interests of women fairly, "when not one man, in the million, shall I say? no, in the hundred million, can rise above the belief that Woman was made for Man" (p. 36).

The puzzling ereference to woman's "nature" quoted above brings us to a consideration of Fuller's concepts of femininity and masculinity. In "Woman in the Nineteenth Century" she makes it clear that she conceived of woman and man as fundamentally different:

> The especial genius of Woman I believe to be electrical in movement, intuitive in function, spiritual in tendency. She excels not so easily in classification, or recreation, as in an instinctive seizure of causes, and a simple breathing out of what she receives, that has the singleness of life, rather than the selecting and energizing of art. (p. 115)

This is the kind of stereotype that is rejected by many women today, on the grounds that, while it may accurately describe an existing reality, that reality cannot be ascribed to biology but must be considered a result of history, a matter of conditioning, until proven otherwise. Fuller never really dealt directly with the nature/nurture debate and its implications for her concepts of femininity and masculinity.

Although she considered woman and man to be essentially different, the difference implied complementarity rather than inequality:

> Male and female represent the two sides of the great radical dualism. But, in fact, they are perpetually passing into one another. . . . There is no wholly masculine man, no purely feminine woman. (pp. 115-116)

When Fuller admitted an inequality, it was usually in woman's favor. She thought, for example, that poets, artists, and men of genius generally are distinguished by what is feminine, rather than masculine, in their nature (p. 103). And she returned more than once to the idea of the "electrical, the magnetic element in Woman," which she felt

> has not been fairly brought out at any period. Everything might be expected from it; she has far more of it than Man. This is commonly expressed by saying that her intuitions are more rapid and more correct. You will often see men of high intellect absolutely stupid in regard to the atmospheric changes, the fine invisible links which connect the forms of life around them, while common women, if pure and modest, so that a vulgar self do not overshadow the mental eye, will seize and delineate these with unerring discrimination. (p. 103)

In considering the implications of the differences between the feminine and masculine nature, Fuller rejected the idea that these differences dictate separate spheres of activity for women and men. She wanted women, in the course of realizing their own individual potential, to be free to pursue any kind of career to which they might be inclined; hence her oft-quoted remark about sea-captains: "If you ask me what offices they may fill, I reply--any. I do not care what case you put; let them be sea-captains, if you will" (p. 174).

But in an essay called "Educate Men and Women as Souls," Fuller wrote of Woman:

> Nature has pointed out her ordinary sphere by the circumstances of her physical existence. She cannot wander far. If here and there the gods send their missives through women as through men, let them speak without remonstrance. (p. 335)

And in another essay she said, "We believe there has been no female lawyer and probably will be none . . ." (pp. 221-222). Are these comments to be taken as contradictions of the feminist principles presented in "Women in the Nineteenth Century"? A careful evaluation of all of her writing seems to indicate that the only point on which her opinion sometimes wavered is that of the extent to which the limitations of the female body--its relatively lesser strength, its vulnerability during pregnancy--need influence the growth of a woman's soul. She seemed to vacillate between a determined belief that a woman's physical limitations need have no impact whatsoever, and a reluctant resignation to the idea that biology and physiology may actually dictate a more circumscribed existence for women than for men. The dilemma is still with us, but the problem is perhaps less critical in our automated age than it was in Fuller's time.

In any case, she recognized that there is a wide range of variation in the physical capabilities, as well as the intellectual abilities, of both women and men:

> Fourier . . . in proposing a great variety of employments . . . allows for one third of women as likely to have a taste for masculine pursuits, one third of men for feminine. (pp. 174-175)

It is certain that Fuller herself felt constrained by the traditional woman's role, which she rejected for an active career as intellectual, teacher, critic, journalist, and belated revolutionary. "We would have every barrier thrown down," she said. We would have every path laid open to Woman as freely as to Man" (p. [illegible]7). Her goal was freedom for each person of either sex to choose a career on the basis of individual ability and preference, substantially the position taken by many feminists today. Despite her lack of foresight in predicting that women would never become lawyers, she would never have agreed that women be *forbidden* to become lawyers.

There is one curious remark in the essay called "Educate Men and Women as Souls":

> Society is now so complex, that it is no longer possible to educate Woman merely as Woman; the tasks which come to her hand are so various, and so large a proportion of women are thrown entirely upon their own resources. *I admit that this is not their state of perfect development*. . . . (p. 336, emphasis supplied)

How is this odd statement to be interpreted? It seems to contradict the central theme of "Woman in the Nineteenth Century," that is, the insistence on the importance of independence, of self-development, of the realization of one's potential. A sympathetic interpretation of this passage might go something like this: Fuller's doctrine of self-realization did not emphasize a sink-or-swim approach; it is inimical, rather than helpful, to self-realization for individuals to be "thrown entirely upon their own resources" before these are sufficiently developed; the qualities of resourcefulness had been discouraged, rather than encouraged, in most of Fuller's female contemproarires. Fuller's meaning is not clear, but one is surely justified in an interpretation consistent with rather than contradictory to the feminist philosophy that emerges in the rest of her writing.

Fuller's views in the matter of employment were of course considered extremely radical at the time, but this was hardly the only subject on which she spoke out more forcefully than any of her contemporaries had yet dared to do. She considered the problems of poor women, prostitutes, and criminals, and suggested that "respectable" women were partly responsible for the condition of their less fortunate sisters. Middle and upper class women, she insisted, set the standard of values for women in general: when rich women indulge in conspicuous consumption (as we would call it), they tempt poor women to steal or prostitute themselves in order to acquire that which the wealthy have made seem valuable.

> Now I ask you, my sisters, if the women at the fashionable house be not answerable for those women being in the prison? (p. 146)

It is a concept of sisterhood not dissimilar to that current among radical women of today, many of whom, unfortunately, have never heard of Margaret Fuller.

Fuller was not among the leading abolitionists of the day, but she did realize that black women, too, are a part of the sisterhood. In calling upon white women of her own class to agitate, privately or in an organized way as each saw fit, for the abolition of slavery, she urged:

> It will not so much injure your modesty to have your name, by the unthinking, coupled with idle blame, as to have upon your soul the weight of not trying to save a whole race of women from the scorn that is put upon their modesty. (p. 168)

There were some suffragists who were anxious to strike a bargain with the abolitionists: you help us get the vote and we'll use it to help you abolish slavery. But Fuller wanted women to oppose slavery on principle, not for base political motives:

> This cause is your own, for, as I have before said, there is a reason why the foes of African Slavery seek more freedom for women; but put it not upon that ground, but on the ground of right. (p. 167)

Feminist theorists today are fond of making analogies between women and blacks, but the idea is not new. "If the negro be a soul, if the woman be a soul," wrote Fuller, then "to one Master only are they accountable" (p. 37).

On the lighter side, a tidbit from "Woman in the Nineteenth

Century" that will sound familiar today:

> A woman of excellent sense said, "It might seem childish, but to her one of the most favorable signs of the times was that the ladies had been persuaded to give up corsets." (p. 164)

One has only to recall the recent furor over that mythical "bra-burning"incident to imagine the reaction that Fuller's candid remark on undergarments must have elicited from the respectable folk of her time.

In a more serious vein, Fuller considered the question of how the existing state of affairs, once the need for change was acknowledged, could be improved. Addressing herself to Fourier as social theorist and to Goethe as social philosopher, she said:

> Fourier says, As the institutions, so the men! All follies are excusable and natural under bad institutions.
>
> Goethe thinks, As the man, so the institutions! There is no excuse for ignorance and folly. A man can grow in any place, if he will.
>
> Ay! but, Goethe, bad institutions are prison-walls and impure air, that make him stupid, so that he does not will.
>
> And thou, Fourier, do not expect to change mankind at once, or even "in three generations," by arrangements of groups and series, or flourish of trumpets for attractive industry. If these attempts are made by unready men, they will fail. (pp. 124-125)

Fuller believed that "there must be a parallel movement in these two branches of life" (p. 76). She developed no alternative system of her own, but rather put forward a set of principles by which one might be guided in evaluating a given course of action.

"Woman in the Nineteenth Century" is a monumental work. The organization is poor, the prose often murky and full of tortured literary illustrations--but the tone is exalted, and the message electrifying. It is a call to all women everywhere to rise up together and take their rightful places in this world, making it a better world in the process. "The time is come," Fuller declared, "when a clearer vision and better action are possible--when Man and Woman may regard one another as brother and sister, the pillars of one porch, the priests of one worship":

> I have believed and intimated that this hope would receive an ampler fruition, than ever before, in our own land.
>
> And it will do so if this land carry out the principles from which sprang our national life.
>
> I believe that at present, women are the best helpers of one another.

> Let them think; let them act; till they know what they need.
>
> We only ask of men to remove arbitrary barriers. Some would like to do more. But I believe it needs that Woman show herself in her native dignity, to teach them how to aid her; their minds are so encumbered by tradition. (p. 172)

Some Critical Reactions

"The book is out," Fuller wrote to a friend, "and the theme of all the newspapers and many of the journals. Abuse, public and private, is lavished upon its views, but respect expressed for me personally."[3] But that is not the whole story.

Newspaper reviews were mixed. Horace Greeley, who had published the book, reprinted a review that Lydia Maria Child had done for the Boston Courier in his paper, the New York Daily Tribune. Child praised the book for its candor, saying that the prose was "deficient in clearness" but the thoughts expressed were "noble and beautiful."[4] Child also did a review for the Broadway Journal in which she supplied readers with a column of sample quotes from the book,[5] perhaps because another review in the same paper was less favorable.[6]

William Cullen Bryant wrote an editorial on "Woman" in the Evening Post, not wholly endorsing Fuller's views but recommending that everyone read the book because "the subject of it is so great, and the thoughts it puts forth so important."[7]

"Woman in the Nineteenth Century" was also reviewed in journals in America and Abroad. The Christian Examiner panned Fuller's literary style but was otherwise sympathetic--perhaps because their reviewer had apparently missed the point:

> She does not ask that woman may be thrust into man's sphere, but that she may have a right and honorable sphere of her own, whether as sister, daughter, mother, or "old maid."[8]

Fuller would hardly have defined woman's rightful position solely in terms of her relationship to some man.

The lengthy review in the Southern Quarterly Review may be taken as a typical illustration of the negative reaction. Women, in this view, are unfit for serious pursuits. As soon as a woman begins "mingling with man in the pursuit of knowledge," the piece said, "she is unsexed."

> One of the distinctive characters of the Female organization is a feebleness of muscle. . . .
>
> Of all the effects of this muscular debility, the most important is the dependence into which it throws her upon man. . . . This sense of dependence inspires her with a strong desire to please. And she attains this object by the practice of all those virtues which give to her sex its true superiority. The reputation of these virtues is as dear to her, as is their possession . . . ,[9]

and so on and on, ad nauseum.

Several of Fuller's biographers compared her book to Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, although mistakenly suggesting that Fourier was to the former what Rousseau was to the latter.[10] This is an oversimplification and neglects to take into account the wide range of thinkers whose influence on Fuller's work is clearly important, including especially Emerson and Goethe.

Surely the nastiest comment made about the book, at the time of its publication or since, is that of Katherine Anthony in her psychological biography of Fuller. Discussing a disagreeable incident that occurred involving Fuller and Nathaniel Hawthorne, who was not one of Fuller's greatest admirers, and basing her conclusion on comments made by Hawthorne's son, she wrote:

> This extraordinary account of the origin of Margaret's book suggests a solemn thought: had her will to power been satiated by persuading the Hawthornes to take in boarders, her *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* might never have been written! (p. 34)

The inexplicably hostile tone of Anthony's entire book prompts the reader to wonder whether a psychological biography of Anthony herself might not prove both interesting and informative.

Another of Fuller's biographers wrote that "Woman in the Nineteenth Century" was "a tract for the times, and it caught on. Copies of the book reached remote spots on the expanding frontier, and it was pirated in London. It was praised and denounced on all sides. . . ."[11] Women's rights was no less controversial an issue in Fuller's time than it is today.

The student of Margaret Fuller's feminist writing is left with many questions unanswered. One cannot help but wonder, for instance, what changes her views may have undergone as a result of her experience of marriage and motherhood. She once chided Emerson on his demeaning attitude toward the birth of a girl, and asked:

> Why is not the advent of a daughter as "sacred" a fact as that of a son. I do believe, O Waldo, most unteachable of men, that you are at heart a sinner on this point. I entreat you to seek light in prayer upon it.[12]

Some years later, when she herself had given birth to a son, she wrote to her sister:

> As was Eve, at first, I suppose every mother is delighted by the birth of a man-child. There is a hope that he will conquer more ill, and effect more good, than is expected from girls. This prejudice in favor of man does not seem to be destroyed by his shortcomings for ages. Still, each mother hopes to find in hers an Emmanuel.[13]

Part of Fuller's predicament may stem from the fact that her feminist views were inextricably linked with her ideas of religion--and her deity was male. She might have written an entirely different work if she had ever considered the possibility that man created God in his own image.

Copyright © 1975 and all rights reserved by Deborah Reich.

NOTES

[1] Sarah Margaret Fuller Ossoli, Memoirs, ed. Arthur B. Fuller, et al. (Boston, 1852), I, 133.

[2] Joseph Jay Deiss, The Roman Years of Margaret Fuller (New York, 1964), p. 16.

[3] Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Margaret Fuller Ossoli (Boston, 1884), p. 202.

[4] (February 12, 1845).

[5] (February 15, 1845), 1.

[6] Quoted by Arthur W. Brown, Margaret Fuller (New York, 1964), p. 132; I was unable to find this review in the original source.

[7] (February 18, 1845).

[8] 38 (May 1845), 416-417.

[9] 10 (July 1846), 170, 168-169.

[10] See biographies of Brown (pp. 127-128); Mason Wade, Margaret Fuller: Whetstone of Genius (New York, 1940), p. 131; and Katherine Anthony, Margaret Fuller: A Psychological Biography (Folcroft, Pa., 1920), p. 68.

[11] Wade, p. 134.

[12] Ralph Waldo Emerson, Letters, ed. Ralph L. Rusk (New York, 1939), III, 170.

[13] At Home and Abroad; or, Things and Thoughts in America and Europe, ed. Arthur B. Fuller (Boston, 1856), p. 437.

JANE E. WHEELER

Lucie Cheng Hirata
Women in China

UCLA
Spring 1974

YOUNG WOMEN IN THE CHINESE COUNTRYSIDE: DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW LIFE-STYLE IN THE 1950'S

Introduction

The collectivization and commune movements in the Chinese countryside (roughly 1953 to 1959) represented an intersection of the political and production needs of Chinese society as a whole with the particular social and economic needs of Chinese women. The intertwining of these two movements, collectivization and women's emancipation, forms the basis for one scholar's remark that the Chinese Communist Party has stressed the entry of women into social production as the key to their liberation, putting into practice the tenet of "classic Marxism" that women will be emancipated "as a part of the emancipation of the productive forces of society."[1]

Indeed, Chinese newspaper articles and editorials from the 1950s often reminded their readers that Marx, Engels, and Lenin all pointed out that women's full emancipation was dependent upon their entrance into social production. And in 1955, Chairman Mao stated that

> Genuine equality between the sexes can only be realized in the process of the socialist transformation of society as a whole.[2]

Collectivization and women's emancipation had the same enemies in the countryside at this time: the petty production system, whose primary unit was the patriarchal family, and the

---

[*] Most sources used are translations of materials originally written or published in China.

6

system of private ownership of the means of production (land), which was its base. The end of the system of petty production, with its consequent rationalization of production and expansion of the forces of production, was to benefit society as a whole and prevent a resurgence of the old semifeudal society. For women in particular, though, it meant an end to endemic rural underemployment and the capability to socialize labor which was previously "women's work" in the home.

These changes enabled women to enter into social production outside the home on a large scale, breaking their economic dependence on father or husband and freeing them from familial control in their work life. While Chinese women had performed only 13 percent of all farm work in the 1930s,[3] by 1959 rural women accounted for over 40 percent of the total number of workdays in agriculture for that year.[4]

However, the related goals of socialization of household labor and the full integration of women into the social labor force were by no means completely achieved in the 1950s. Rural women often did not consider productive labor outside the home as their primary life role. Married women tended to define themselves primarily as household workers, and in general they tailored their productive labor outside the home to fit the demands of their household duties, rather than vice versa. For example, in 1962 in Liu Ling village of Shensi province, most women still stopped working in the fields after the birth of their first child.[5]

But the process had been set in motion, and many achievements had been made. Social barriers to women's participation in agricultural work were broken down, especially in north China, where they had been much greater. Most rural women became literate in the great literacy campaigns of the 1950s--a prerequisite to any advanced technical training. Women who stepped outside their homes to work achieved a greater degree of economic independence, learned new and useful work skills, and raised productivity in their communities as a whole.

A New Life-Stage for Women

I want to focus here on just one aspect of the process of women's entrance into social production: the development of a new life-stage for young unmarried rural women during this period. This development is significant in its own right, but even more important as an illustration of the vanguard role played by young Chinese women in challenging and changing women's social and productive roles.

The new life-stage corresponded roughly in time to the traditional *ch'ing-nien* stage of development (16 to 30 years of age or less, usually terminated by marriage), though in "traditional" China the term *ch'ing-nien* was not usually applied to females.[6] The new female *ch'ing-nien* saw their main role as productive workers outside the home. Reports of their activities indicate their three most important characteristics:

1. Their commitment to socialist construction was expressed through active and enthusiastic participation in collective production.

2. They were noted for physical strength and energy, and most especially for physical endurance and willingness to suffer hardship.

3. They were fearless and flexible in their approach to techniques and methods of production.

The development of this new life-stage for women depended on several factors, including the ending of child marriage, the gradual raising of the ideal marriage age for women, increased educational opportunities for women, and the influence of the Communist Youth League. Though its development encountered some opposition from the older generation, parents and elders often considered productive activity more acceptable than political activity, especially since it generated income for the woman's family. The female *ch'ing-nien* stage generally ended when the woman married, usually moving away from her native village, but some young married women seemed to continue their self-definition as primary production workers through the short period until their first pregnancy.

Young Women in Pre-Liberation China

The five "absolute age groups" in the traditional Chinese family have been described as follows: the *ying-erh shih-ch'i*, or "infant period," lasting from birth until the age of 3 or 4; *yu-nien*, from ages 4 to 15 or 16; *ch'ing-nien*, or "youth," from 16 or 17 to 30; *ch'eng-jen* or "adult," and *lao-nien* or "period of old age," beginning at 55.[7] In the *yu-nien* period, children's roles were increasingly differentiated by sex. At the age of 5 or 6, a peasant boy began to accompany his father to the fields and to learn his future production role. Girls, on the other hand, were withdrawn from contacts outside of the home, and were increasingly isolated from all but the women of their own families. Though most Chinese women, especially in north China, experienced varying degrees of domestic seclusion, its enforcement seems to have been more severe for young women.[8] Most of their time was spent in learning and performing household tasks; they appeared in the fields only during the busiest season, if at all.[9] As a traditional proverb said, "When it is busy on the farm, girls may leave their rooms to help."[10] What farm labor girls and women did perform was circumscribed and supervised by males. Women and children usually did not handle farm implements nor tend draft animals.[11]

Peasant girls did not enter the ch'ing-nien stage, an "interstitial" period between boyhood and manhood for some young men, especially urban youth. Levy describes the ch'ing-nien period as that in which

> an individual can no longer be treated as a yu-nien or child for most purposes and yet is not a full-fledged adult member of society.[12]

Peasant girls were not ch'ing-nien because marriage terminated the ch'ing-nien stage. If they had not already been raised in their future husband's household as child-brides, peasant girls were married off in their teens. They were marginal members of their own families, and were often considered economic liabilities, since they spent most of their time in their own families training for production roles they would fulfill in another family, that of the husband. The attitudes of the girl's family and of boys' families were summarized in two slogans current in Kwangsi in the 1930s:

> To marry your daughter as early as possible is to save your food; to acquire a daughter-in-law is far more advantageous than to hire a laborer by the year.[13]

Impact of the Marriage Law

In the early 1950s, though participation in production was held to be the key to Chinese women's emancipation, rural women did not enter the labor force in large numbers. Production was still based on private property and on the family as the basic unit of production even after land reform, and seasonal underemployment continued to be a problem for both men and women in the countryside. But the adoption of the new marriage law of 1950 had important consequences for the role young women were to play in the movements for mutual aid and agricultural producers' cooperatives, the first steps in the collectivization process.

The new marriage law, one of the first laws enacted by the government of the People's Republic of China, voided the old marriage system "based on arbitrary and compulsory arrangements and the supremacy of man over women" and established a new system of marriage to be based on "the free choice of partners" and "equal rights for both sexes."[14] In response to the law's guarantee of freedom of marriage, many young women broke off engagements which had been arranged without their consent.[15]

Another section of the marriage law marked the end of the practice of taking child brides and established what seems to be a rather high minimum marriage age for a peasant society:

> A marriage can be contracted only after the man has reached 20 years of age and the women 18 years of age.[16]

Both the minimum age provision and the guarantee of freedom of marriage delayed marriage age for young women. This meant that girls in their late teens and early twenties might remain with their own families, in their native villages, for a longer period of time. Since these women were childless and did not have to take over all the household duties from a mother-in-law, they were not as burdened with domestic chores as previous generations of young women had been. Some had time, like the 18-year-old Tsui-lan in The Women's Representative (a play written in 1953 for the marriage law implementation campaign), to devote to social production--in Tsui-lan's case, to a handicraft group. The response of elders in the community may sometimes have resembled the old Mrs. Wang's criticism of Tsui-lan:

> I really can't understand why you do it. None of your families need your support. Young girls like you, dashing all over the place. . . .[17]

Young Women Ch'ing-Nien in the Collectivization Movement

With each advance towards socialism in the 1950s came an increase in labor force requirements in the countryside. Men and women who already worked in the fields increased their number of workdays per year, and women who had never worked outside the home entered into agricultural production and agricultural capital construction for the first time in large numbers during the period of the higher-stage cooperatives and the Great Leap and commune movements.

Married women who wanted to enter agricultural production faced many barriers which were greatly eased, but not completely overcome, by attempts to collectivize housework and childcare, which reached their culmination in the peoples' communes in 1958-59. Even when childcare and cooking were done collectively, married women in many areas still had heavy domestic responsibilities, often including sewing clothes and making shoes for their families, doing laundry, fetching water, and tending domestic animals. Furthermore, married women often had to contend with in-laws who did not approve of women's being so active outside the household.

Obviously, young unmarried women were in a better position to fill the gap created by the increasing labor shortage in the countryside. Also, they were still in their native villages, and had long-standing ties to their villages which made it easier for them to play a leadership role in the battle for production. Newly married women, in contrast, were usually newcomers to a village, due to the combination of the customs of village exogamy and patrilocal residence. They had to be extremely careful not to offend men like a certain team leader who "would not take criticism, coming as it did from a bride."[18]

Consequently, some young women took a very active part in the cooperativization movement. Lu Yu-lan, for instance, was fifteen in 1955 when she went from home to home in her village in Hopei persuading poor and lower-middle peasants to organize an agricultural producers' cooperative. She also

> encouraged women to take part in collective productive labor outside th household, and opposed the old idea still held by a few that "men go to the county town, but women's place is in the home."

Lu persuaded one new bride to work in the co-op by taking her sewing basket to the woman's house every night, learning needlework while discussing women's emancipation. (Lu Yu-lan is now a member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.)[19]

Other young women, like Lu, were leaders and organizers of the production effort, though they sometimes faced discrimination against them by older peasants, especially the men. One woman, a twenty-two year old named Chu Kuo-yun who was chairperson of the Sanho co-op in Hupei, learned how to deal with an old peasant, Chen, who thought women could not lead:

> If he would not agree, she would try to convince him. If he still would not agree, she would herself do whatever it was and show him. If he was still not convinced, she would hold an open debate among the members and when opinion was

unanimous she would turn triumphantly to Chen: "There you are," she would say, "You alone are in opposition."[20]

The vice-chairperson of the Beacon co-op in Liaoning, described as a "young girl," also ran into opposition from men who said, "You can't expect much from a girl vice-chairman, can you?" and from a brigade leader who turned his head away every time he ran into her. But she persevered; the women in her co-op were particularly active. Eighty percent of all able-bodied women members participated in farm work, "young girls" being the "most active" and forming the "backbone of the co-op. The co-op had four production brigades, each with one male and one female team. The female teams consisted of "women who are led by young girls . . . just out of primary school."[21]

As the movement for socialist construction progressed in the countryside, young women were less and less willing to perform tasks which they associated with traditional women's roles. A co-op near Peking which wanted to set up a nursery found it difficult to obtain the proper staff, because "strong and energetic women preferred to do farm work, which they viewed as a symbol of their new emancipation."[22] Instead of filling traditional roles, many young women delighted in doing difficult physical labor, or in performing work which even men had not thought possible before. For instance, young women competed to see how many oxen and double-share ploughs they could manage at one time. An 18-year-old girl from Chekiang who demonstrated her ability to handle two ploughs (four oxen) at once had one thought: to try for three.[23] A 15-year-old girl from Kweichow was able to handle six buffaloes at once on six ploughs.[24]

Young women began to band together to form women's shock teams to take on the most difficult and challenging production tasks. In 1955, in Shantung, the "nine girls with wills of steel," led by a Communist Youth League member, formed a shock team to reclaim land previously covered by three to nine feet of sand.[25] In Hupei, the "eight Paddy Girls" challenged the chairman of their Changfeng co-op in his attempt to grow over 10,000 catties (one catty equals 1.1 lb.) or rice per mou (one mou equals 1/6 acre) on an experimental plot with this jingle:

> Thousand catties a mou comes like a bolt of thunder;
> It flashes and startles--no wonder!
> But sisters, work harder!
> We'll surely outstrip Kwan, our leader.

Unfortunately, Kwan won.[26]

Young women and their shock teams were especially active in the massive agricultural capital construction projects of the Great Leap period. In the winter of 1957-58, 73 million Chinese women worked on water conservation projects; and in 1958, 67 million worked on afforestation projects, constituting more than 50 percent of the total labor force for the latter.[27]

Twenty thousand women worked on the Ming Tombs Reservoir north of Peking, about one-fifth of the total labor force.[28] Work on the reservoir lasted from January to June of 1958. One of the most advanced women's teams working on the project was the Seven Sisters' squad, made up of young peasant girls who lived near the Ming Tombs. The girls' application to join in the work was rejected four times before they finally went together to the headquarters of the project and persuaded the detachment leader that they could endure the cold and hardships. The seven sisters exhibited a trait which was to become more prominent in the commune novement: competition with young men for labor honors. It was said of the seven sisters that

> in whatever was given them to do, they were all the time competing, though secretly, with young lads doing the same kind of job, and they showed up well. . . . They even dared to challenge the sturdiest young men for faster and better records in carrying sand and stones on to the dam from a distance of 700 metres.[29]

Another women's water conservation shock team, "The Three Orchids" of Kansu, was led by a 17-year-old girl. The men of their co-op had shirked working on a much-needed canal because its path through the mountains was "too cold and rocky." In the winter of 1957, the Three Orchids agitated for the canal "and went themselves to the hills to dig until they shamed the men into finishing the job."[30]

As the roles for young unmarried women in the countryside expanded, women's ideas of the proper marriage age changed. In December 1958, Anna Louise Strong asked one of the Three Orchids her opinion on the subject. The answer was 20 to 22 years of age for women.[31] By 1963, the ideal marriage age was considered to be 25 to 30 for men, and 23 to 28 for women.[32] How closely reality approximated the ideal is unclear, but there seem to have been a large number of unmarried young women in their teens and early twenties who were deeply engaged in productive labor during the Great Leap and commune movement.

In this period, women's mastery of production techniques as well as work efficiency were emphasized. Labor honors were bestowed on women whose performance was deemed exceptional. Titles such as "women's red flag holder," "women production experts," and "women innovators" were given out.[33] Some of the titles seem to refer specifically to young women of the *ch'ing-nien* age: bumper harvest girls (3 million in Hupei in 1960) and "red, industrious and ingenious girls" (700,000 in Shansi in 1960).[34]

Besides continuing their involvement in agricultural capital construction, young women became engaged in the movement for high-yield experimental tracts which would demonstrate the advantages of the new Eight Point Charter for Agriculture, a program for agricultural development. The participation of young people in the high-yield tract movement was emphasized because application of the charter implied a shattering of accepted norms, and youth were assumed to be less tied to old methods. Young women were led forward in this work not by local branches of the women's federation, but by the Communist Youth League. Often the leaders of the women's shock teams--on the high-yield tracts and elsewhere--were Communist Youth League members.[35]

In *The First Years of Yangyi Commune*, a detailed account of the Great Leap and commune movement in one local area of China, the authors describe two of the women Communist Youth League members who led young women in production work in Shehsien County, Hopei. Both were unmarried and 22 years of age. Ho Kuei-ch'ing of Kuhsin Commune was especially noted for her work in 1959 in the fertilizer accumulation movement. When the other women held back, Ho Kuei-ch'ing waded right into the cesspools to scrape out every bit of fertilizer. Then she led the group to the mountain tops, where they lowered themselves over the cliffs to scrape pigeon droppings off the ledges, gathering 260 tons of organic fertilizer.[36]

Chu Hsu-mei of Yangyi Commune was the vice-head of Yangyi's experimental high-yield cotton tract. She also led a women's shock team on the tract, called the "Five Plums." Chu Hsu-mei's shock team was so outstanding and so advanced in technique, that it was one of the six winners of a county-wide "standard bearers" competition in 1960.[37]

The tract on which Chu Hsu-mei worked had 220 workers, 80 of them women. Teenage boys and girls from the Communist Youth League were the most eager to sign up for the tract. Some of the girls faced opposition from home:

> A rash of quarrels broke out, between mothers telling their daughters that this was no job for them, and daughters who insisted that they lived in a new age.[38]

Young Women Ch'ing-Nien and the Women's Movement

Though the zeal and hard work of the Communist Youth League inspired young women were admirable, in their enthusiasm for socialist construction they sometimes disregarded or underplayed questions of concern to women, especially to older married women.

Young women in Yangyi and elsewhere refused to pay much attention to the problem of labor protection for women. Being young and strong (and childless) themselves, they "could hardly be restrained" during campaigns (such as anti-drought work or steel-making) in which "the task had the urgency of a battle."[39] The young women were more interested in competition with each other and with the men, and in demonstrating their advanced techniques and physical prowess, than in the question of safeguarding women's health. The magazine Women of China warned in 1961 that,

> In production work, some young female commune members challenge the male commune members in emulation as to their work zeal. They think that women can carry what men can carry and do what men do. This kind of spirit in emulation is good, but it is improper to indulge, in an over-simple manner, in physical contest.[40]

Nor were the young women as sensitive as they might have been to the urgent need of the older women for collectivization of household labor. For instance, in Chiliying People's Commune in Honan, young women at first refused to work in the community dining hall, saying that with the establishment of the people's communes, "they would certainly not stick around the oven anymore."[41] Young women had a tendency to scorn work in the social welfare services in preference to what they saw as the real battlefront, agricultural production.

Finally, such young women tended to put questions of women's equality far behind more general goals of "building communism," seeing these as separate issues (a tendency currently under criticism in China). In Yangyi commune, for example, the commune secretary (a man) tried to establish "equal pay for equal work" on the high-yield tract where women had shown themselves to be skilled and dedicated workers. Other men countered with the argument that "we're the main breadwinners of the family, not these teen-aged girls. They'll soon be leaving home to get married, anyway." The commune secretary lost the argument, partly because

> the issue was not a burning one, for the girls who had broken most of the records and who might logically have been most

dissatisfied belonged to the "Five Plums" team. They would go all out whatever happened, for they saw themselves as "builders of communism" and were quite ready to be patient with those whose vision was as yet less broad.[42]

In sum, the young female *ch'ing-nien* sometimes tended to see engagement in social production as the whole solution, rather than as the basic foundation, in dealing with women's emancipation. They often downplayed the importance of work in the political, and especially in the ideological, sphere in the attempt to eradicate women's oppression. (Perhaps not until the current campaign to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius has the ideology of women's oppression received enough attention in China.)

But the young women's trail-blazing in production served an important function for the women's movement, and certainly constituted an implicit criticism of old ideas about women. The tough, brave and hardy young women who came to the forefront as agricultural workers in the 1950's shattered old notions of the shy and reclusive young girl, and their bold disregard for the old norms is surely one of their most appealing characteristics.

Notes

[1] Eli Zaretsky, "Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life," in Socialist Revolution, No. 15 (May-June 1973), pp. 40, 44.

[2] Mao Tse-tung, Quotations from Chairman Mao (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1966), p. 297.

[3] John Lossing Buck, Land Utilization in China (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1968), pp. 292-293.

[4] "A Great Anniversary for Women," China Reconstructs, 9, No. 3 (March 1960), 1.

[5] Jan Myrdal, Report from a Chinese Village (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 239.

[6] Marion J. Levy, Jr., The Family Revolution in Modern China (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 89.

[7] Levy, pp. 66-127.

[8] See Martin C. Yang, A Chinese Village: Taitou, Shantung (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), p. 191.

[9] Levy, pp. 78-79.

[10] Buck, p. 307.

[11] Yang, pp. 23 and 49.

[12] Levy, p. 85.

[13] Institute of Pacific Relations, Agrarian China: Selected Source Materials from Chinese Authors (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), p. 83.

[14] *The Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China* (3rd ed.; Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1973), Article 1.

[15] Liu Ching, *The Builders* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1964), p. 31.

[16] *Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China*, Article 4.

[17] Sun Yu, "The Women's Representative," in *The Women's Representative: Three One-Act Plays* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1956), p. 46.

[18] Hao Jan, "The New Daughter-in-Law," *Women of China*, No. 5 (1958), p. 34.

[19] Lu Yu-lan, "A Liberated Women Speaks," in *New Women in New China* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1972), p. 8.

[20] Shen Han-min, "An Audacious Girl," *Women of China*, No. 5 (1958), p. 20.

[21] "A Visit to a Co-op," *Women of China*, No. 1 (1957), p. 13.

[22] Sun Tan-wei, "A Village Nursery--How It Grew," *China Reconstructs*, 5, No. 8 (August 1956), 28.

[23] Hsiao Ching-shih, "The Girl Who Handles Two Ploughs," *Women of China*, No. 3 (1958), pp. 20-21.

[24] Anna Louise Strong, *The Rise of the Chinese People's Communes* (Peking: New World Press, 1959), p. 88.

[25] "Women Builders of Socialism," *Peking Review*, 1, No. 41 (1958), 12.

[26] Fang Chi, "The 10,000 Catty Plots," *Women of China*, No. 5 (1958), pp. 9-10.

[27] John Philip Emerson, "Employment in Mainland China: Problems and Prospects," in Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, *An Economic Profile of Mainland China* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 434.

[28] "Hail the Ming Tombs Reservoir!," Women in China, No. 5 (1958), p. 3.

[29] "The Seven Sisters," Women in China, No. 5 (1958), p. 16.

[30] Strong, p. 86.

[31] Strong, p. 86.

[32] Lu Yang, "The Correct Handling of Love, Marriage, and Family Problems," Chinese Sociology and Anthropology, 1, No. 3 (Spring 1969), 28.

[33] Ts'ai Ch'ang, "The Role of Women in Socialist Construction," U.S. Consulate General Hong Kong, Current Background, 579 (April 1959), 10.

[34] "The People's Commune: A Good Set-Up for the Thorough Liberation of Women," U.S. Consulate General Hong Kong, Survey of Mainland China Press, 2210 (February 1960), 5.

[35] Isabel Crook and David Crook, The First Years of Yangyi Commune (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1966), p. 51.

[36] Crook, p. 54.

[37] Crook, p. 37.

[38] Crook, p. 80.

[39] Crook, p. 251.

[40] "Further Improve the Labor Protection Work for Members in Rural Communes," U.S. Consulate General Hong Kong, Extracts from China Mainland Magazines, 280 (August 1961), 18.

[41] Yin Chih-hui, "Life Is Undergoing a Change: On a Public Mess Hall of the Chiliyung People's Commune in Hsin-hsiang, Honan Province," U.S. Consulate General Hong Kong, Extracts from China Mainland Magazines, 152 (September 1958), 15-20.

[42] Crook, pp. 127-128.

CREATIVE WORK

The selections here are only an indication of the wealth of creative work produced in women's writing workshops and related classes around the country. From SUNY/Buffalo, for example, Lillian Robinson and Janice Mackenzie sent a portfolio of 55 poems by 22 authors compiled from four years of a Women's Poetry Workshop. As with the Women's Biography Collective at Cal State Sonoma, this workshop, offered for undergraduate credit in the Women's Studies College, enabled those who were students one semester to become teachers another semester; "We are all apprentice writers," Robinson argues.

The poetry selections, arranged thematically, come from the Buffalo workshop, from "Identity through Expression: A Literature and Writing Course for Women," taught by Tristine Rainer through UCLA's Counsel on Educational Development, and from a series of courses and workshops taught by Susan Griffin at the University of California, Berkeley Extension.

Students in the latter workshop responded generously to the request for materials, particularly with poems and short stories. One of them wrote, "Though I am forty-two now and have two children, and earned a B.A. and M.A. when they were little, and then taught, I always wanted to concentrate on writing, but never wrote a word after high school until Susie's classes." Student after student affirms the power of these classes to encourage them to write. The short story by Lois Buescher is a product of one of Susan Griffin's classes; part fiction, part subjective journalism, it deals complexly with one of the major issues of concern to modern feminists: rape.

The longest selection in this volume is Gloria Albee's Medea. Ms. Albee, who returned to school as an undergraduate at the University of Washington after 24 years, wrote the first draft of the play for Joan Webber's course, Women and the Literary Imagination. Revised and expanded, the play was produced by Western Washington State College. This winter it is being produced on off-off-Broadway by the Westbeth Playwrights' Feminist Collective. The play is a reexamination of a patriarchial myth from a feminist perspective. It is also first-rate drama.

Clearly, students in these classes are building the self-confidence, the trust, and the discipline to write imaginatively about themselves and their world. They are learning not only to speak, but to speak publicly. And they are being heard.

LOIS BUESCHER

Susan Griffin
Workshop in Fiction for Women

UC Berkeley, Extension
Summer 1974

WHO'S ON TRIAL HERE?

> Legislation to protect a rape victim from having to reveal her sexual history in court won approval in the California Senate yesterday after intensive debate. . . . The 31 to 3 vote sent the bill to the Assembly. The bill would prohibit defense attorneys in rape cases from using "evidence of specific instances of the victim's sexual contacts involving any person other than the defendant."
>
> San Francisco Chronicle, April 3, 1974

The clock outside was striking 11:00 when we walked singly into the jury deliberation room and were locked in by the bailiff. The twelve of us found chairs and scraped them forward into comfortable writing and leaning positions around the long table. The room was warm and smelled of stale air and smoke and I got up and opened a window. We were on the fifth floor of the Court House and our view consisted of the tops of buildings in assorted sizes, ranging in design from Spanish adobe to Roman architecture. The City across the Bay was barely visible through its cover of dirty brown fog.

We were silent for a moment. Then the chicken-faced woman, whose long beak had seemed held in abeyance all during the trial waiting to peck greedily, now said, "They're two of a kind, if you ask me!"

---

*This story is based on an actual trial in the Superior Court in Oakland where Ms. Buescher was one of the jurors.

The woman next to her, who had spent her time during the trial reading movie magazines and playing cards, agreed, "She picked him up at a bar in the first place--"

"And then when he comes around and she lets him in at 4:00 o'clock in the morning--well, seems like she was asking for it," another said.

"Yeah," said one of the men, "That would be consent, wouldn't it?"

All at once, everyone started talking. I think, he is innocent--Let's get this over with. Shall we take a vote now? Maybe we can finish this up early and get home.

"Don't you think we should discuss the evidence in the case?" I asked. "And we haven't even chosen a foreman yet."

The nine women and three men decided that the well-dressed bronzed business man of about 55 should be foreman. He consented. I suggested each one speak in turn.

The young girl just out of high school said, "I don't think he's guilty. I think she just wanted a black stud."

"Did you see those phony tears?"

My God, I thought, I'm all alone here. I am left sitting with my half-uttered, half-conceived thoughts, feelings, words, about the evidence, justice--and no one wants to hear them!

I went back in my thoughts to the victim. The woman. She had hurried into the courtroom and down the aisle to the witness chair, her eyes looking down, her head, with its unattractive knot of brown hair, bent forward on her hunched shoulders. Her demeanor seemed to say, let's get it over with, as if she didn't really want to be here--as if she knew she was going to lose again.

She looked to be in her middle thirties. She was not pretty, but she was not unattractive either, if one took the time to study her face. Her eyes were dark brown and I saw a warmth in them when she let her glance turn once in my direction. Her lips were full and rather sensual. She wore no makeup. Her dress was a printed silk fitting loosely, falling below her knees, with long sleeves covering her arms to the wrists. As the trial had progressed, I suspected that her attorney purposely had her tone down any suggestion of sexuality, a strategy to convince the twelve jurors of her victimization. I found myself wishing that she could have walked proudly into the court, head held high, dressed the way she always dressed, reflecting her sexuality as part of her naturalness, her wholeness--that she could have been free to do this.

As she sat there in her chair like a cage, telling her story, twisting her hands in obvious agony, weeping, waiting for justice, I wanted to stretch my arm out to her.

When she spoke her voice was pleasantly modulated, genteel.

"It was four o'clock in the morning. The doorbell was ringing and I got out of bed to look from my window to see who was there. I could see that it was Les--"

The District Attorney interrupted her, "Please tell the court who Les is."

"He is the man sitting over there." She pointed at the defendant.

"When did you first meet this man?"

"About two years ago."

"Where?"

"In a Berkeley bar."

"Then what happened?"

"We came to my apartment for another drink."

"Did you have sexual relations with him?"

"Yes."

"How many times after that?"

"About three, I think."

"Did your relationship with this man end after that."

"Yes."

"When was the last time you saw him?"

"A few weeks after that night I met him."

"Please continue. What happened on the night in question when he came to your door at 4:00 o'clock in the morning?"

"He wanted to come up, and I said no, that I had to get up early and teach my class, that I hadn't had much sleep. He persisted, and said he only wanted to talk for a moment--could he come up for a cigarette. I acquiesced then and went down to let him in. I saw that he had been drinking and I said again, you can't stay, Les, and he said, just one cigarette and I'll go. We went up the stairs to my apartment and sat on the couch, talking a few minutes, about what we'd been doing. When I finished my cigarette I got up saying that I had to get some sleep, that I was very tired, telling him that I would talk to him tomorrow.

"In a sudden movement he reached out his arms and had his hands around my throat. I couldn't believe what was happening--that he was going to choke me. I said, Les, you're hurting me, and I tried to loosen his hands. I couldn't and his grip got tighter and tighter, and I was terrified. I began to black out and I knew he was going to kill me--"

Her voice faded out and she stopped to wipe her eyes.

"Please continue if you can. When you became conscious what happened?

"I was lying on the floor and he was bending over me, pulling me to my feet. He led me by the arm toward the bedroom. I protested, feeling terribly frightened. My head and eyes were aching and I felt faint and staggered. He held me up and said, come on now, and I knew it was no use to resist. That he was going to have his way. I was afraid--I did not want to die, so I went to the bed and lay immobile, and he had his sex. I then said, please go now, Les. But he wasn't ready and after a few minutes he did it again."

"What did he do?"

"He raped me. Twice."

"Did he leave the ?"

"No. He started to go to sleep. I shook him, and said, wake up. You've got to go. I kept talking to him to keep him awake, to get him to go."

"When did he go?"

"It must have been an hour or so later."

"About 5:00 o'clock?"

"Yes, about then."

"Did he say anything before he left?"

"He said, did I rape you, Helen?"

God, I thought, haven't they ever considered what rape is? Do they all know, or think they know, what we secretly want?

"I said, yes, you did, Les."

"I suppose you don't like me much now, do you?"

"And I answered that I didn't like the Les that was here tonight, that I didn't like what happened."

"Did he leave then?"

"Yes."

"After he left what did you do?"

"I was so upset at first I didn't know what to do. I wanted to talk to someone. I went down to see if the woman who lived below me was home. She wasn't."

"Did you call the police?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I don't know, exactly, except somehow I thought that Les was sick, emotionally, and I didn't want to cause him any trouble."

"But you did call the police later. Why did you change your mind?"

"I decided to go see a woman friend. When she saw me--by that time my eyes were very red and swollen--she wanted to know what had happened and when I told her she said I should go to the police."

The prosecutor walked back to his table. He was a young attractive man of Oriental ancestry. He spoke in low key, seriously, seemingly thoughtful and courteous. He did not seem to be particularly skillful. Perhaps he was handicapped by a lack of evidence (and he produced only one other witness), or was it that he really didn't care whether he won the case, but was giving merely a perfunctory examination?

He returned to the witness with an envelope. He took some photographs out of it.

"Will you identify these, please."

"Yes, they were taken by the police--pictures of my eyes."

"When were they taken?"

"The morning after the attack."

He asked the court that they be admitted as evidence, and he brought them to us to view. I looked at them--closeups of her face showing massively hemorrhaged eyes. I shuddered when I thought of the pressure of his hand around her throat, of her arteries leaking blood into her eyes.

* * *

The thin nervous woman in longish dress and strong eyeglasses, who mostly sat staring out the window, turned her eyes inside the room and said, "Shall we take a vote?"

"What! We've only just started," I said.

"Oh. But I'd like to get this over with today. My vacation starts tomorrow."

"I'd like to remind everyone that we're here to review, as the judge said, the facts in this case. And we haven't," I said, not caring that my voice was filled with irritation.

The foreman was saying, "It's just about lunch time. Shall we take a vote now to get the lay of the land so to speak, before we go?"

The "ayes" had it, so the slips of papers were passed out. When they were added up there were 11 "not guilty" votes and 1 "guilty."

All eyes turned to me.

"I was afraid of that," said the chicken-faced woman.

"Let's discuss the case further after lunch," I said.

We rang the buzzer to get the bailiff's attention and were shepherded into a van with an extra guard to "protect" us. I vaccilated between feeling like a VIP and a prisoner. The guard and the bailiff sat with us while we all ate to keep us away from prejudicial outside influences. The foreman was saying over coffee, "It's hard to say if he's guilty. I think they probably did have a fight. He might have hit her. But rape? After all it wasn't as if he hadn't been there before. He was drunk and probably thought he'd drop by for some, and when she wouldn't give it to him, he took it."

* * *

"Your witness," said the assistant district attorney.

The defense attorney, a tall thin young man, black curly hair surrounding his dark-skinned face, looked to be a few years out of law school. He seemed personable, articulate, and intelligent. He approached the witness for cross examination.

"How long have you been divorced?"

"Ten years."

"Children?"

"One girl nine years old."

"How many times have you had sexual intercourse since then?"

"I really can't remember."

"Would you say as many as 10 times?"

"Possibly."

"Or 50 times?"

"I don't know. Maybe."

"Did you frequently go to bars to meet men?"

"Yes."

"How often would you say. Twice a week?"

"Usually once a week."

"Did you take them to your apartment and have sexual intercourse?"

"Sometimes."

"On the night that you first met the defendant did you not take him home to your apartment and have sex with him?"

"Yes."

"And did you not on the next night have sex with his friend?"

"Yes."

"And on these occasions you had been drinking, is that not correct?"

"Yes."

"In fact, didn't you usually get very intoxicated?"

"I drank, yes. But usually not more than two or three drinks."

I was angry. The attorney for the defense was dutifully playing his tricks of the trade, presenting to the jury a promiscuous woman who was "free" with sex, a "loose" woman who frequented bars and drank too much.

After the woman finished her testimony she hurried out past the two spectators sitting in the viewers' section, the way she had entered, alone.

* * *

Back in the deliberation room after lunch, we got cokes and coffee and picked up our pencils and paper.

"Let's get this over with. I want to get home before the freeway traffic starts."

"No, let's discuss it some more," I insisted. "We've only talked for about an hour all together."

One of the women said, "What about her eyes--those pictures. They bother me."

"Me too," I agreed.

"She probably had a coughing fit or something," the young black girl said.

* * *

The state called its only witness to the stand. He was an M.D. and was handed the colored photographs that had been taken the next morning after the alleged attack. He riffled through them.

"Doctor, would you please tell the ladies and gentlemen of the jury the condition of the complainant's eyes as shown in these photographs," asked the District Attorney.

"Yes, I would say that the eyes show the condition of a massive hemorrhage."

"Could pressure around the neck bring about this condition?"

"Yes."

"Please explain."

"Pressure on the blood vessels in the neck would cause the flow of blood to build up in the head until the blood vessels or capillaries in the eyes would break."

"Would you say, judging from the condition of the eyes in these photographs, that the person had been choked until unconscious?"

"Yes, she could have been."

"Your witness."

The defense attorney approached the doctor.

"Doctor, isn't it usual in the case of extreme pressure on the neck that there would be bruise marks showing?"

"Usually, but not always."

"Would you say that this blood in the eyes could have been caused by, say, an extreme attack of coughing?"

"Possibly, but I think extremely unli--"

"Thank you, that will be all."

* * *

"I think she's lying."

"What reason would she have? It was no picnic for her to come here and bare her soul," I said.

The black girl looked at me with her dark hurt-filled eyes and out of her unsmiling lips the words came.

"She was getting even with him because he wouldn't have no more of her."

"He seems like such a nice young man. Handsome too," said the fiftyish plump woman in the Virginia Graham suit.

The defendant was a handsome black man, young--probably about twenty-five, properly dressed in a plain brown suit with pale green tie. He was tall, well built, lithe--looking in every way a Sidney Poitier "acceptable" black. When he spoke his voice had none of the Southern Negro accent, but rather was that of an educated Northern black. He had been at one time a student at UC Berkeley. He had sat all during the woman's testimony, cool, his face a pleasant mask, revealing nothing of his feelings, his body seemingly quiet and watchful.

During the testimony the defendant's voice dropped to a barely audible low, his words running together. The judge admonished him to speak up so everyone could hear. He would do so for a few sentences and then drop down again, like a little boy, I thought, who was telling a lie, unconsciously thinking that if he spoke low enough no one would hear the lie.

His story was really quite incredible. In fact, his attorney used this tack in selling his story--it was just unbelievable enough to be true.

"I came to her apartment at that hour because I had been working on a play, and I thought I'd ask Helen to take a part in it--to see what she thought about it."

"It couldn't have waited for a more reasonable hour?"

"Well, time was short-- And Helen was sometimes up late. I just took a chance that she would be that night."

"You say," said the man's attorney, "that you had been lying on the couch and Helen had bent over to pull you up and at that very instant that she bent over you raised up and bam--you bumped heads and she fell to the floor."

"Yes."

"Was she unconscious?"

"No. I took her hand and pulled her up."

"Did you have sexual intercourse with her then?"

"Yes."

"Did you rape her?"

"No. She wanted it, too."

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury I ask for your verdict of guilty on both counts. Please review the evidence and the testimony. This woman has no reason to lie. She has nothing to gain except to see that this crime does not go unpunished and that justice is done. It has been a very painful experience for her to come before you and tell her story. She has been candid about her life--and if promiscuity and indiscretions have been a part of her behavior it is not for us to pass judgment upon that. The defense has put her life style on trial--but remember--she is not on trial here--the crime was committed against her.

The defense was summing up. Members of the jury, you have no choice except to find the defendant not guilty. Let's review briefly the facts in the case. This woman--going to bars, finding her companionship in strange places, drinking to excess--in a few words, are you going to believe the testimony of this kind of unstable person against the words of the defendant?

* * *

"After all," the foreman was saying, "it isn't as if the woman was a young innocent girl. Even if he did force himself on this woman it seems like he ought to get off with a lighter sentence."

"Rape is rape, isn't it?" I asked, livid at such senselessness. "Murder is murder! That's like saying that since she was a woman of what you think are questionable morals she therefore deserves to be raped. Would you advocate that since a man who obviously was of unsavory character was murdered deliberately, his murdered be given a lighter sentence?"

No answers--only blank stares--

It was time to vote again. I wished the evidence were more conclusive. I had a gut feeling that she was telling the truth and that he was lying. But I remembered what the judge has instructed us to do. "The prosecutor presents proof to convince the jury of guilt, not by mere preponderance of evidence, not by the clear weight of evidence, but beyond a reasonable doubt. Therefore, you, as members of the jury, after weighing the evidence--and based on the facts in the case, not on suspicions, hunches, emotionalism--will be asked to make a judgment as to the guilt or innocence of a young man accused of assault with intent to do great bodily harm and rape."

I wished that there were more evidence than the pictures. What about no marks on the neck? Why did not her friends testify on her behalf? Did no one care? What if he weren't guilty and my vote of "guilty" meant that another jury would send an innocent man to prison? How does one know beyond the shadow of a doubt?

"We've been talking for two hours. Let's take another vote," said the chicken-faced woman. "I'm getting bored with this."

The votes were counted again. Eleven innocent, and one guilty.

"Oh, not a hung jury. My vacation starts tomorrow--and I'm simply exhausted."

The foreman looked at me. "What would you say to a compromise? A misdemeanor?"

Oh, hell, I thought--it's no use--

* * *

"Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, have you reached a verdict?"

"We have, your honor."

"Bailiff, you may read the verdict."

"Not guilty on the charge of rape, not guilty on the assault charge, guilty of a misdemeanor on the second count."

The room was quiet. There was no one in the visitor's gallery. She was not there. I thought of her sitting at home in her cage, knowing what the verdict would be. All alone.

The defense lawyer and his client were all smiles. They came forward and thanked the jurors. And in turn they were thanked by the judge for performing their duty, one of the most important responsibilities of American Citizenship--

I don't know--will never know--if he was innocent or guilty. I think he was, but not beyond a reasonable doubt. So my shock and anger were not so much at the verdict as at the way the jurors had reached it. If justice was done it was purely accidental. For the woman, not the man, had stood trial.

ANDREA ABBOTT

Women Writers' Workshop:
Poetry

Women's Studies College
SUNY/Buffalo

THOMPSON'S DEAD COW

About a mile and a half
From where the willows poked
Frozen fingers into
Our skates and the
Last lonely muskrat house huddled
There was the dead cow.
Very dead
Dead, like a stone
Like a stick
Like a corn husk
Dead as if we shouldr't mind
Her lying there
Not dead with flowers
and wax smell
and crying
Just dead the way
She'd been alive.

Sticking up above the snow
Next to the frozen creek
One eye open, glazing--
(No flies in winter)
The boys threw stones,
Laughed, quick, hard
Before the silence cracked
But I
I wanted to turn
Run, scream, skate
Back five minutes in time
Before we saw the dead.

COP-OUT FANTASY

Someday I will turn around
From ringing up a sale
Or putting a $6 dollar ticket on a glass elephant
Or hearing about how I should have done it
Another way; or how I should
Know where that is by now
And He'll be standing at the counter
A few inches taller than I am
His black hair curly, His eyes north-sea green
And all the charm to turn
An ugly face handsome.

And of course He'll take me away
By Quantas in lieu of a charger
To everlasting sun and sandy beaches
Koala bears and pints of bitter
Having somewhere found the time
The money and the love
To cross the ocean and rescue me from
Snow-drifts and leaking boots,
Hanging from a bus pole
And making the last of the hamburger
Last longer

ANN

My neighbor sat in my kitchen
Tears running into her coffee
"I think I'm pregnant, what should I do?
I don't know what I can do."
"An abortion?"
She thought
"I think maybe I'd like a baby,"
I thought of the women up and down the street
Babies on the hips
Men gone
Freedom was what they talked about
As they changed diapers behind the
tiny store counters, opening blouses for tiny mouths
Panhandling the streets
And love was what they talked about
As they found one man, and hoped
for forever and feared tomorrow
and followed, while they could
"I think maybe I'd like a baby,"
"Then I'd, you know, have somebody."

DIRECT ENERGY FROM THE SUN

ZAP!
Leo I am and
    I am
Proud-cat and royal
ruler
In disguise, exiled

ZAP!
Marvel comic
heroine I am and
    I am
Shiny booted above
Masscult and popcult

ZAP!
Sun Goddess I am
  and I am
Bright Centered Dynamo
In eclipse
My strength
waning with the winter

BUT WATCH THIS
SPACE

BECKY BIRTHA

Women Writers' Workshop:
Poetry

Women's Studies College
SUNY/Buffalo

*WE WERE SISTERS, THEN**

We were sisters, then,
Coming home from the Italian market
With pounds of potatoes, onions
And fish in the bottom of the bag.

At the last stall you bought us two
for a quarter:
Round, yellow balls of mozarella
Cheese so fresh the milk dripped down our chins
And we carried the bag between us
Eating our cheeses down
Ninth street to the corner.

That was how we came upon it:
Suddenly--A windowfull of
Little white dresses: organdy and eylet batiste
Smocking and dotted swiss and lace
And stiff-starched crinoline poised
For flight. A whole shop--
Windowfull, a flock of Sunday white.

You told me you had never taken first communion.
We pressed our noses to the plate-glass
Like little girls

Then licked our fingers and turned
Down South Street. The twisted handles burned our fingers
And the brown paper grew damp
With fish at the bottom of the bag.

---

*Previously published in The Program Guide, WBFO-FM, Buffalo

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN

Susan Griffin, Coordinator
A Mouth that Speaks: A Poetry Gathering

UC Berkeley, Extension
Spring 1974

TO MY SISTER

i think of you
in new york.
your head out the window
in the n.y. woman's pose of
waiting for someone
something
to arrive but
only
the sirens, police, ambulances.
you have to live there of course,
your husband is a surgeon he
needs to be near
the hospital.
i think of you
in new york.
i escaped
by your chains and i am
sorry to have left you
waiting.
there is
nothing
to wait for.
there is
only the pose itself:
2 million women
seated at their windows
like city plants
fighting the air.

JODY DANIELS

Tristine Rainer
Identity Through Expression:
A Literature and Writing Course for Women

UCLA, Counsel on Educational Development
Winter 1972

MURPHY HALL

This is the kingdom of women
with an occasional fly placed, carefully,
midst all the milk and honey.
A buzzing hive of female workers
feeding a few male queens.
Get fat plump queens,
Get fat plump deans.
And let the women fight off the world
strapped to the tedious tasks not fit for your highness.
Milk them, feed off them
until you become Chancellor.
Then you can say you made it off female sweat,
not Wheaties,
and give them a pat on the ass and a rose for their efforts.

ELIZABETH KATE JACKSON

Tristine Rainer
Identity Through Expression:
A Literature and Writing Course for Women

UCLA, Counsel on Educational Development
Winter 1972

I'LL PLAY THE KAZOO (WITH YOU)

I don't know,
or can't remember
what I've breathed about Kenneth Leslie Freeman
(the Leslie he positively can't stand)
who sometimes wears glasses
(the glasses he positively can't stand)
who stands about 6'3" inches, has a beautiful
nose that doesn't work, an allergy and asthma
that does,
And absolutely plays the kazoo
(knows all 3 verses of "It's a Small World")
and skips more melodically and higher,
respectively, than anyone I've ever met.

Met him long time ago at the Biltmore Hotel
at a Psychology Convention
(can you imagine)
He was striking.
Corduroy brown coat and all.
That was March 1970.

See, he was from Washington State, so I figured
I'd never see him again--
But he walked me to the bus stop
(that was sweet of him).

December '70
I called.

I was down.
He came December 18, 1970 said--
I'm falling in love with you said--
I am in love with you said--
I'm coming back said--
Be strong said--
for as long as there are oranges
and pelicans
so ...
I
waited
January,
February,
March,
April,
May,
June,
July,
Kenneth,

He came back to me
came back to me and said--
I can't love you now said--
There are too many things
I'm committed to said--
You're asking too much said--
Be strong said--
goodbye

GENOCIDE

This ain't hardly a revolutionary poem.
It's all about
White boys
that wink at Black girls
and
Black girls who
wink back.

The interest starts when your man indicates
Black correlates negatively with Beauty
and Money
and Excitement
and Intelligence
and Sensuality

And calls you African Queen while he righteously
escorts miss Finland '69 on his
arm.

And tells you how warm you are, while miss
Switzerland heats the sheets in preparation
for his slumber
and
other
things.

And wonders at how very rare it is, indeed
that you comprehend the roots of jazz so well,
most sisters don't they say.
Which I suppose is why you see so many interracial
couples at Shelley's Manne Hole.

How you're so intelligent--Yet the only chick
got an A on her Afro-American history test was
the Blond haired Blue eyed babe that sat in the
front row and volunteered liberal cliches.

And that you're different from other sisters,
cause you not hard
and Sapphire like.

And more sisters ought to be like you--
then brothers would come around.
But
I
Am
Like
Me.
Where
Are
You?

And you wonder about sisters like Roberta
Flack, Lorraine Hansberry, Lena Horne.

So today,
when a white boy winked at me
I winked
back.

MARTY MOATZ-AUSTIN

Susan Griffin
Women's View of the Contemporary World

UC Berkeley, Extension
Spring 1973

SIGNING THE DIVORCE PAPER

I signed the divorce paper.
I cried all day.
I couldn't remember one thing
I didn't like about him.
I could only re-play
The highlights of our moviemarriage.

From
the first disney scene ...
The wedding
The honeymoon
The cheap apartment
The kitten
The walks and talks
The house
The baby
The LOVE

To
The grand finale ...
that's all folks.
My marriagemovie ended.
Production terminated ...
for reasons beyond our control.

I was fired.
I've given up my act.

But
I still don't understand the Ending.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE IN THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

A friend says, "you know, if you weren't so pretty, I'd worry
about you."

You cook a meal and you're told you're out of character.

You begin to notice how few male friends you have.

Your supervisor at work pulls up your skirt to see if you shave
your legs.

You are invited to dinners as the conversation piece.

Your parents sit you down and ask if you've got sex problems.
"Are you a ... one of those? We'll pay for a psychiatrist,
darling, we just want you to be happy."

You tell a man you don't want to sleep with him and he says he's
worried about you. After all when was the last time you
screwed?

You fuck, get pregnant, and the man leaves for Boston.

You are told what you need is a good fuck.

You wear a dress and people ask if you've given up.

You are introduced to others as "The Feminist."

You are not expected to be gentle, soft or kind.

You must have no conflicts between your behavior and your values.

The projector won't work. You ask the principal to help you. He smirks and says, "So, you finally admit you need a man's help."

You have conversations with men where nothing applies.

You pretend it applies because you're afraid something's wrong with you.

You say nothing applies and you're told something's wrong with you.

Your parents want to know where they went wrong. Your mother is not allowed to speak during the entire discussion.

A FEMINIST SONG

when i stopped taking cookies
from my daddy's jar,
daddy crumbled
and there was no one
to hand me the broom.

Joan Webber
Women and the Literary Imagination

University of Washington
Fall 1973

MEDEA

by

Gloria Albee

© 1974 Gloria Albee

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that *Medea*, being fully protected under the Copyright Laws of the United States of America and all other countries of the Universal Copyright Conventions is subject to royalty. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio and television broadcasting, and the rights of translation into foreign languages or recorded on any mechanical device are strictly reserved, permission for which must be obtained from the author in writing. Gloria Albee, care of The Feminist Press, Post Office Box 334, Old Westbury, New York 11568.

Thanks to Robert Graves for permission to quote from *The Greek Myths* (Penguin, 1955).

MEDEA

> *"Others again, misled by the dramatist Euripides, whom the Corinthians bribed with fifteen talents of silver to absolve them of guilt, pretend that Medea killed two of her own children."*
>
> Robert Graves

CHARACTERS

MEDEA
JASON
APSYRTUS
MELEAGER
IPHITUS
ATALANTA
CORONUS
PELIAS
CREON
GLAUCE
ARGONAUTS
WOMEN
TWO MALE CHILDREN

Act One .... At Colchis
Act Two .... At Iolcus
Act Three .... At Corinth

ACT ONE

Scene One

(A temple on a mountain at Colchis. It is night. There is the sound of a drum beating from far away. The temple is part of the mountain, its western, rear wall being a slightly shallow cave. Upon this wall is hung the Golden Fleece. The eastern wall is open. There are a few pillars holding up a roof which extends the size of the cave and shelters an altar downstage from the Fleece. MEDEA and her half-brother, APSYRTUS, are performing a ritual.)

MEDEA: Oh, Hecate,
Sovereign of the heavens, the earth, and the underworld,
Mother of the Moon.
Show us how we may banish death and darkness.
Bring forth your sun
To live and die this day
Yet be reborn tomorrow.

IPHITUS: (Offstage) Atalanta? Is that you?

ATALANTA: (Offstage) This way, Iphitus. Hurry.

APSYRTUS: Strangers.

MEDEA: Hide yourself. Quickly.

(MEDEA blows out the lamp, and they crouch in dark corners of the temple. JASON and a few of the ARGONAUTS enter downstage, feeling their way. JASON is about thirty years old, handsome, rugged, charming. Almost immediately the light takes on the gray character of pre-dawn.)

IPHITUS: Do you think we are almost there? I can't see a thing it's so dark.

JASON: I think this is it. (IPHITUS starts to sit on a rock and rest.) Watch out! There is a nest of snakes there. (IPHITUS leaps up and moves away. The snakes hiss.)

ATALANTA: It's not much of a temple.

IPHITUS: What do you expect from barbarians?

JASON: (Looking to the East where the sky is growing light.) Still it faces East, as Aeetes said.

MELEAGER: Well, I haven't seen any dragons about, have you? You think he means the snakes?

JASON: I don't know what he means. He's playing games with us. But that must be the Fleece.

(He points to the rear wall, where the Fleece still looks pretty drab in the gray light. The men look up and JASON moves tentatively towards it. MEDEA, who has been sitting frozen, is in his path, and as JASON approaches her she tries to move out of his way by backing up as unobtrusively as she is able. JASON, however, sees the motion and pauses, drawing his sword.)

Something's there!

(He takes a step forward, and raises his sword, intent upon delivering an immediate death blow to whatever it is, when the first rays of the sun enter the temple and fall on the Fleece. The effect of this is dazzling. JASON and the other ARGONAUTS are immobilized by the growing display of gold before them as the Fleece radiates more and more of its brilliance through its reflection of the rising sun. Reaching a peak of intensity, the brilliance then diminishes as the sun rises higher, until only normal daylight lights the temple and the Fleece is in shadow. Just after the brilliance reaches its peak, MEDEA and APSYRTUS try to take advantage of its effect upon the ARGONAUTS by fleeing. MEDEA stands up to run, but she is too close to JASON, who reaches out and seizes her on seeing that she is only a quite small and human adversary. They struggle, but he is immediately aware that she is no match against his strength, and throughout their struggle he never really takes his eyes off the Fleece. Her hood falls back to reveal that she is a barely mature female: arrogant, egotistical and determined; impressionable, innocent and vulnerable. APSYRTUS' flight appears more successful, but his departure is seen by MELEAGER, who leaves downstage left in pursuit. With the diminished radiance of the Fleece, JASON takes a closer look at the figure he now has locked in his embrace.)

JASON: Why, it's only a girl. Hey, Iphitus, I've got a skinny girl for you. Are you one of the temple virgins impatient for the next full moon?

(The men laugh and nudge each other knowingly.)

ATALANTA: Maybe she's your dragon, Jason.

MEDEA: I am Hecate's priestess!

JASON: Yes, but are you the dragon? Do you eat men? Shall I show you how men taste?

(He kisses her at length. Her body is rigid, but there is a point during the kiss when it is apparent that each feels stirred by the other. She renews her struggling, and bites him. JASON releases her from his embrace. She is startled to find herself free, then turns to go.)

Wait! You have not answered my question. (She pauses.) Are you th dragon?

MEDEA: Who are you?

JASON: I am Jason of Iolcus and I have come for the Golden Fleece.

MEDEA: Take it then and leave.

JASON: We have conditions to fulfill, apparently. Aeetes said it should be mine, along with his virgin daughter, if I could tame the dragon that guards the Fleece and plow and sow the sacred field before the day is through. I cannot tame a dragon I cannot find. Are you the dragon?

MEDEA: I am the dragon . . . . I am the sacred field . . . . I am Medea, Chief Aeetes' virgin daughter.

(Their confrontation is interrupted by MELEAGER and several other ARGONAUTS who come in holding APSYRTUS.)

MELEAGER: Jason! Here's another scrawny sentinel. I caught him trying to ring the alarm.

MEDEA: Let him go! (They do not pay any attention to her.) He is Aeetes' only son!

JASON: Iphitus! Take some men and search for Phrixus' bones. You'll recognize his shield and armor. The rest of you stand watch outside while I talk with the dragon. Meleager, take the boy outside and watch him.

(The ARGONAUTS go off good-naturedly, except for MELEAGER, who looks a little perplexed, not having been present at the exchange between JASON and MEDEA. JASON claps him on the shoulder and walks him to the exit.)

The girl is mine. Don't sulk. You may have the boy.

(MELEAGER exits as JASON turns back to MEDEA. They are now alone.)

MEDEA: You will not succeed.

JASON: At what?

MEDEA: At anything!

JASON: It is two years since we left home, the Argonauts and I. We fought and killed the earthborne brothers of the goddess Rhea when we landed at Arcton. Our ship outran the Wandering Islands of the Bosphorus, and we've fought off swarms of hostile birds. Whenever we were challenged we did not let it pass, but stood our ground and passed all tests. And now that I have seen the Fleece, I shall not fail this one.

MEDEA: It is a test?

JASON: To prove my fitness to be chief.

MEDEA: You prove your fitness by stealing our Fleece?

JASON: It is not yours. The Fleece came to your land with my kinsman, Phrixus. He died here, but your people did not give him proper burial and his spirit wandered home. His restlessness disturbs my uncle's sleep, so I was asked to bring his bones back to Iolcus, along with the Fleece.

MEDEA: Aeetes will not let you take the Fleece.

JASON: Not even if I tame the dragon and plow the sacred field?

MEDEA: If you succeed, I will have failed to prove my worthiness as priestess of the moon. You are not the only one who's tested.

JASON: So they have made us two antagonists, who should be lovers.

MEDEA: One of us shall live, and one shall die.

JASON: Then we might as well be lovers anyway.

MEDEA: Are you not afraid to die, Jason?

JASON: We are not going to die, Medea. What good are tests if one does not survive them? I do not believe in martyrdom and death. What do you believe in?

MEDEA: I believe in destiny.

JASON: Of course. But one must make one's destiny.

MEDEA: I never thought about it.

JASON: And if you thought, right now, what destiny is yours?

MEDEA: To someday be the gyne. To serve the Goddess faithfully and bear Her many children.

JASON: If you would bear Her children, some man must plow your field and plant his seed. Shall it be me?

MEDEA: Only if your destiny is death.

JASON: Oh, my little dragon, are you really so untamable? Do you sacrifice your husbands all to Her? Are there no days that follow wedded bliss for those who lie with you? Those bones and corpses, weathering in the sun, are they all that remain of men who were your mates? Was that the destiny of Phrixus? Did he make a present of the sun to the priestess of the moon, only to lose his life?

MEDEA: I did not know your kinsman.

JASON: Aeetes virgin daughter. So I will be the first?

MEDEA: Does that appeal to you?

JASON: How old are you, Medea?

MEDEA: I have lived for sixteen years.

JASON: Such a long time. You seem very sure of yourself.

MEDEA: It is a great responsibility to be the gyne. My mother and the other priestesses have taught me all they know. This will be my life. If you wish, Jason, before you die you may plant your seed in me. Then your death would have some purpose.

JASON: You speak very glibly about my death. Do they school priestesses in the ways of men?

MEDEA: I know men are as various in their moods and temperaments as we women are.

JASON: But do they teach you of the sweetness that can grow only with many couplings? It is not the body's mystery that excites, Medea, but the unlocking of the mystery. To find the secrets and indulge the senses is an art you cannot ritualize. It requires cultivation and good weather, like any other fruit that's harvested.

MEDEA: It is you who are the bewitcher.

JASON: Do you know that skin has music?—that flesh can sing? Your body has a rhythm and a counterpoint that must be listened to. No man can walk up to an instrument and make it vibrate with a song unless it is in tune—and that takes time and practising.

MEDEA: I am a hollow, five-stringed shell. Listen. If you hold me to your ear you can hear the roar of an ocean of desire. My senses are strung out across its opening. Everything I see and hear, or touch and taste and smell pulses, waiting for the melody you'll pluck to set my lyric free.

JASON: You play with me.

MEDEA: How so?

JASON: You lead on my desire.

MEDEA: There is no need. My function is to satisfy your lust.

JASON: I do not want one night. I want them all.

MEDEA: You do not seek oblivion in my arms?

JASON: Only if it is an oblivion that renews itself.

MEDEA: Show me again how men taste, Jason.

JASON: And will the dragon's fire consume me?

MEDEA: I will not singe a hair upon your head.

(They kiss.)

(LIGHTS OUT)

Scene Two

(An interval has passed. MEDEA lies, curled up and sleeping, on the floor. JASON sits a little way from her. MELEAGER enters.)

MELEAGER: The witch is still asleep? She seems well tamed. Shall we be off before she wakes? We've collected Phrixus' bones.

JASON: Not yet. I need her still.

MELEAGER: Your desire has not cooled?

JASON: I have a feeling that she's still necessary to me.

MELEAGER: Has Eros sent his shaft into your heart?

JASON: If love is need, then I will love whoever gets me off this mountain, with the Fleece, and safely home.

MELEAGER: You've met Aeetes' terms. You think he'd try to stop us?

JASON: Medea said he would not let me take the Fleece.

MELEAGER: Then why did he let you get this far?

JASON: Perhaps he hoped Medea would fulfill her sacred obligation to the moon and add my corpse to those we stumbled over climbing here. She might still try. She may not be as tame as we would like to think.

MELEAGER: Then why not kill her while she sleeps?

JASON: No, Meleager. Witches have their ways.

MELEAGER: We have the boy as hostage still.

JASON: Yes, that may be of use. Listen. The drums have stopped. Oh, I wish that we were home. I know how Phrixus' shade must feel, wandering around with these barbarians. What am I doing here, Meleager, on this god-forsaken mountain, surrounded by the bones of those who came before?

MELEAGER: You wanted to be chief. Look behind you, Jason. Even in shadow the gold glows like a fire that's banked, ready to blaze forth with each new dawn. What glory will surround the man who takes it back to Greece.

JASON: It's not the vanity of glory that I want. I want the power—the authority to build a fleet and bring the Cretan Empire to its knees. We are the best and toughest sailors in the world, Meleager. We've proved it on this voyage. And Iolcus is filled with young men just like us—crying for adventure and to leave the ties of land behind. When I return and Pelias confirms my right to lead, there's not one man within the Council who would dare to raise his voice in opposition to my plans.

MEDEA: (Waking up.) Jason.

(JASON throws a quick look at MELEAGER who leaves.)

JASON: I must go now, Medea.

MEDEA: Stay with me.

JASON: It's time for me to leave. My men are waiting.

MEDEA: You said you wanted all my nights—and all my days as well.

JASON: We cannot always have the things we want, Medea. I could lose myself too easily in your labyrinth.

MEDEA: I do not want you to go. You are mine and I will not let you leave me. (JASON laughs.) You gave yourself to me.

JASON: That does not make me yours.

MEDEA: Yes. Yes, it does. You cannot leave!

JASON: You cannot stop me.

MEDEA: Aeetes will stop you.

JASON: He will not keep his word?

MEDEA: His word. Why should he keep his word to you? You are his enemy.

JASON: I came in peace—claiming only what is mine.

MEDEA: He has grown attached to what you say is yours. He feels that now it's his. He plans to kill you.

JASON: How?

MEDEA: Stay with me, Jason—here in the temple. Your men can sail home. I shall tell Aeetes not to harm them.

JASON: You will save the men for whom you do not care—but not save me?

MEDEA: I have no power to save you once you leave.

JASON: If you have the power to tell Aeetes not to kill my men, you can do the same for me.

MEDEA: Only if you leave the Fleece.

JASON: What?

MEDEA: The Fleece. Will you leave it here?

JASON: I cannot.

MEDEA: Is it worth your life to have it?

JASON: It is my life. I will be chief among my people when I bring it home. You asked about my destiny, Medea. That is it. I will be the chief.

MEDEA: Aeetes needs it, too. He will lose prestige if he lets you take the Fleece.

JASON: How does he plan to kill me?

MEDEA: He has been gathering his warriors while you've been here.

JASON: Is there another way down the mountain?

MEDEA: Only through Hecate's door.

JASON: I'm not ready for that yet.

MEDEA: Then you are afraid to die.

JASON: I'm not afraid of anything. It's just that I'm not ready. I have worlds to conquer yet. When I am chief . . . would you like to see the world with me, Medea?

MEDEA: It's not possible.

JASON: Everything is possible.

MEDEA: To see the world . . .

JASON: I can show you cities of gold, where one Fleece more or less is but a mark in an inventory. Knossos, Troy, Mycenae, the Treasury of Atreus.

MEDEA: A city of gold. Does it blaze like the Fleece in the sun? I should like to see that. It must be beautiful.

JASON: Not more beautiful than you Medea. You don't want to spend your life buried inside a temple. You asked if I was afraid to die—are you afraid to live?

MEDEA: Afraid to live?

JASON: What would happen if the priestess of the moon came down off the mountain with her lover? Would the warriors fight against you?

MEDEA: You would have to fight Aeetes then in single combat.

JASON: And if I lost. What would they do to you?

MEDEA: You would not lose. Aeetes has been chief for a long time. His strength begins to fail him.

JASON: But if some accident should happen—if I tripped and fell. What would they do to you?

MEDEA: I would be outcast.

JASON: Then they do not love you as much as I.

MEDEA: They would say it was I who had not loved them.

JASON: I would never cast you out, Medea. I swear it by Apollo and by all the gods and goddesses on Mount Olympus. Come with me. We will share our destinies. You said you wished to be the gyne and serve your goddess. We will start a new blood line in Iolcus and I will build a temple there to Hecate. Your children shall be mine and my fortune yours and theirs. I will show you how the love a man feels for a woman can outshine any home-lit candle.

MEDEA: How does one know what love is?

JASON: I know that when I look at you and think of leaving, there is a quickening throughout my body that confounds my senses. I become as weak and helpless as a child. At such a moment, truly I am yours.

MEDEA: Is love the tenderness I feel for you because we have been one?

JASON: Help me, Medea. I need you. Only you can help me.

MEDEA: You are so young and beautiful. I could not bear to see you die.

JASON: Come with us now. Meleager!

(MELEAGER enters.)

Attend the priestess. She is coming with us. I will wrap you in the Fleece, Medea, and carry you away. When we are in Iolcus, I will make a present of it to you.

MEDEA: No! What are you doing?

JASON: I am claiming the Fleece.

MEDEA: You must not. It is death to take it from the temple.

JASON: I will take my chances. Meleager, hold her.

MEDEA: Jason, it will kill you. I will take it down. Let me do it.

(MEDEA breaks away from MELEAGER, but JASON catches her.)

JASON: Would you really give your life for me?

MEDEA: Let me go. I will do it, only let me go. If one of us must die, it will be me.

JASON: Is there no way to take it down then? Meleager, get the boy.

MELEAGER: (Calls offstage.) Iphitus!

MEDEA: No, Jason! You cannot do that! I will not help you if you sacrifice my brother.

(IPHITUS enters with the other ARGONAUTS who are holding APSYRTUS.)

JASON: Then tell me what to do. (Pause.) Very well, then. Meleager, if you let her go this time it will mean your death. You are right, Medea. I will not put your brother in my place; I will meet my destiny. It is up to you to help me if you will.

MEDEA: No! NO! Jason, don't! The altar. Meleager, help me turn the alter.

(Pulling MELEAGER with her, she reaches out to the altar and begins to push it. MELEAGER lets go of her and signals to the other ARGONAUTS to help. They all push on it, and slowly it begins to move, while JASON watches, until it has made at least a 20° turn and faces upstage left.)

Now, Jason. Take it down.

(JASON reaches for the ram's head, which detaches from the Fleece, and as it comes off the hood which holds it a mechanism is released and an arrow shoots out of the altar into the upstage left wall area at chest height. IPHITUS crosses warily to the arrow and removes it from the wall. JASON next takes down the Fleece and as it is removed from the rear wall, the entrance to a deep cave or tunnel is revealed.)

ATALANTA: Look!

JASON: Hecate's door.

MELEAGER: Where does it lead?

MEDEA: To the harbor.

(JASON laughs and goes to MEDEA. Wrapping her in the Fleece, he picks her up as the ARGONAUTS head out through the door of the tunnel.)

JASON: By Apollo, and by all the gods, Medea, what glorious destinies we shall have!

(LIGHTS OUT)

Scene Three

(The deck of the *Argo*. There is a stairway that leads to the interior of the ship. JASON and MEDEA sit on the deck playing some game of dice, apparently oblivious to the men and world around them. APSYRTUS is roaming around, fascinated by the ship. IPHITUS stands watch on the upper deck. MEDEA is happy and laughs.)

MEDEA: Seven! I win again, Jason.

JASON: I think you have bewitched the dice as well as me.

MEDEA: Let's see, you now owe me the golden goblet from Lemnos, three pendants from Crete and the dagger from Mycenae. Would you like to roll again? I shall stake all of my winnings against the small cask of gold you have in your cabin.

JASON: What are you going to do with all this wealth you are accumulating?

(JASON rolls the dice.)

MEDEA: Five! I win. I don't know. It must be good for something. Perhaps Apsyrtus and I can trade it for some land in Iolcus.

(APSYRTUS, hearing his name, runs over and gives MEDEA a hug. She hugs him in return.)

Would you like that, Apsyrtus? I have to do something for your future. (Examining his hands.) Such long, thin fingers. Perhaps you will be a musician.

JASON: I will take care of you both.

MEDEA: No. Apsyrtus and I will take care of ourselves. That will leave you free to love me.

(APSYRTUS runs off to explore again.)

JASON: He is still a child. He can't take care of you.

MEDEA: He'll do his share. I know you'll help us, Jason, but he'll need to feel useful, too. He's going to feel very alone and out of place. I shouldn't have let you bring him.

JASON: He wanted to come.

MEDEA: You always find some way to say things to your advantage. He didn't want to come. He wanted to stay with me to protect me. He would have been far happier if I had stayed behind and waved goodbye to you and to your ship.

JASON: And you? Would you have been happier?

MEDEA: I have never been so happy in my life.

JASON: There! You see! And Apsyrtus is happy when you are happy, so it is good for him, too.

MEDEA: Oh, if ever I need someone to plead in my defense, Jason, I hope you will do it for me. Now I know why Aeetes let you get as far as my temple on the mountain.

JASON: Anyway, it's a good life for the boy. He'll learn a lot on the ship.

MEDEA: I hope so.

(APSYRTUS has been poking and peering everywhere and now he has an accident with one of the barrels. It tips over and the lid comes off.)

IPHITUS: Can't you watch what you're going? Why do you have to get into everything?

(IPHITUS grabs him by the wrist to lecture him.)

MEDEA: Apsyrtus!

APSYRTUS: Let me go.

IPHITUS: Oh, no you don't, you little beggar. You don't get off that easily.

MEDEA: (To JASON) If you're really interested in his learning something on this ship, then I wish you'd speak to the men. They punish him for everything he does. It's making him sly and secretive.

IPHITUS: What you need is someone to take you in hand and teach you who's in charge around here.

(JASON moves towards APSYRTUS and IPHITUS just as MELEAGER arrives to intervene in the situation.)

JASON: (To MELEAGER) I'll handle it. (To IPHITUS) Iphitus. Don't be so hard on the boy. I'm sure he meant no harm. Did you, Apsyrtus?

MELEAGER: Do you like the sea, Medea?

MEDEA: I love it. I wish we could sail forever and never touch land again. (She turns and finds him staring at her.) Why do all of you do that?

MELEAGER: Do what?

MEDEA: Look at me that way. Whenever I turn around I catch one of you sliding your eyes down my body. And when your glance catches mine, you smile and your eyes ask a question.

MELEAGER: What question, Medea?

MEDEA: I don't know. That's what I'm asking you.

(IPHITUS and APSYRTUS grudgingly shake hands. JASON returns to MEDEA while APSYRTUS stands rubbing his wrist, glaring at the men.)

Apsyrtus! Come here.

(APSYRTUS moves upstage nursing his anger. MEDEA leaves MELEAGER and JASON to go after him. MELEAGER watches her go.)

JASON: It's going to be a long trip, Meleager. Some things cannot be shared out equally.

MELEAGER: It's no great matter.

JASON: Nothing doing with Atalanta? Well. How are we doing? Where is Aeetes' fleet?

MELEAGER: We seem to have lost them. They've dropped out of sight, and if the wind holds we should reach the Illyrian Islands by tonight. Once there, we can hide for months and not be found.

JASON: The gods are with us.

MEDEA: Look, Apsyrtus! Jason! What are those great fish?

(JASON goes to join MEDEA, while MELEAGER moves to join IPHITUS who is watching the horizon with growing concern. During the following, they are joined by CORONUS and ATALANTA, also.)

JASON: Dolphins.

MEDEA: Look at them. They're playing games. What fun. Oh, Jason, I want to go swimming, too.

JASON: Don't be silly, Medea. We can't go swimming now. We have to reach Illyria before it gets dark. Maybe tomorrow.

MEDEA: Tomorrow. Always tomorrow. And when tomorrow gets here it will be some new place that we have to reach. Are you always so intent upon some destination that you don't enjoy the trip? What if we never arrive at where you're going? What a waste. I wish I were one of those dolphins right now.

JASON: A moment ago you were happy to be Medea.

MEDEA: I still am. But Medea is many things. That's what I've discovered on this voyage and why I'm happy. I'm not tied up in rituals anymore. I can be a dolphin or a sea gull or a sail that takes the wind.

JASON: Or a dragon? Have we left the snakes and serpents all behind?

MEDEA: I can still breathe fire if that's what you mean.

(MEDEA sees APSYRTUS about to climb the rigging, and runs to rescue him. MELEAGER takes this opportunity to point out to JASON what he has been observing on the horizon.)

MELEAGER: Aeetes' fleet is catching up. The current has grown stronger and we sail against it. We are losing time.

JASON: We must lose them now.

MELEAGER: Why don't we put those two overboard? Aeetes would have to stop to pick them up, and then we'd gain the time we need.

JASON: No.

MELEAGER: Then we'd better all start praying. Perhaps you can get the witch to do that much for us.

(APSYRTUS has wandered down to where they argue, while MEDEA watches the dolphins. No one notices the boy listening to the conversation.

JASON: She is not to know Aeetes follows us.

(APSYRTUS hears this and moves off to the ship's rail to search for his father's ship.)

She might still change her mind.

MELEAGER: Then let her. Let her go.

JASON: I make the decisions on this ship!

(Hearing JASON's raised voice, MEDEA turns, but finds ATALANTA watching her.)

MEDEA: Do you have some question, too, Atalanta?

ATALANTA: No. Yes. Why did you come with us?

MEDEA: Perhaps for the same reason you did.

ATALANTA: I came for the adventure.

MEDEA: And I did not?

ATALANTA: You came because of Jason.

MEDEA: Then you've answered your own question, haven't you?

ATALANTA: You don't belong here. I was raised by hunters to live like a male. I have a place on this ship.

MEDEA: My people worship life. As priestess of the moon I heal the sick, summon the sun and rain, nurture the newborn, and sow the seeds of regeneration on the fallow fields. I prayed to Hecate to call forth the dawn—and Jason came. Not some aged, willing sacrifice—nor a defeated captive slave—but the sun itself. Aeetes wanted me to kill him, but that was his responsibility. What have I to do with death? Isn't there someone for whom you care enough to do the same?

ATALANTA: I have taken a vow of celibacy.

MEDEA: If you have such scorn for love, still you must have friends. Will you be my friend?

ATALANTA: You are a barbarian.

CORONUS: (Catching sight of APSYRTUS at the rail.) I know a way we can lose Aeetes' fleet.

APSYRTUS: (Softly, as he catches sight of the ships.) Aeetes.

JASON: (To MELEAGER) Get that boy below and lock him up.

(JASON crosses to MEDEA and turns her so they are walking away from the men. MELEAGER and the others lure APSYRTUS below with the temptation of a jeweled bracelet.)

MEDEA: Why were you quarreling with Meleager? Was it because of me?

JASON: What makes you ask that?

MEDEA: He doesn't like me. None of them do. Do your men look at the women of Iolcus the way they look at me?

JASON: How do they look at you?

MEDEA: Like they are waiting. As if they expect something from me.

JASON: It's because you are a woman. You excite them. Just as you excite me.

MEDEA: The men of Colchis do not regard their women so.

JASON: No? I seem to recall Aeetes fondling two or three young girls who passed within his reach.

MEDEA: I'm sure they were only slaves.

JASON: Women just the same.

MEDEA: Are you implying I'm a slave?

JASON: No, Medea. Of course not. But you are out of your normal orbit. My men don't know what to make of you. Where do you fit in? You are something wonderful and new upon the earth.

MEDEA: That is a very extravagant compliment.

JASON: I did not mean it as a compliment at all. You stand here on this deck, rushing towards an ever-changing horizon, not knowing any longer what your destiny will be. Going somewhere. You welcome every current, any tide that carries you away. Where will you go when you tire of me? They want to know if they can take my place.

MEDEA: Why don't they say so instead of leering at me sideways. I've no intention of tiring of you and I shall tell them so. Still, you might tell them to leave their names with Apsyrtus, just in case. After all, Jason, I wasn't raised to devote my life to one man only.

JASON: I envy you your freedom. What was it you said? You are glad to be free of rituals. The rest of us poor, ordinary folk are still hemmed in by them.

MEDEA: You are too serious today. I wish we could go swimming. Where is Apsyrtus? He will go swimming with me; we will jump overboard together. Then you will have to stop the ship and we can all go swimming with the dolphins.

(MELEAGER and CORONUS enter.)

MELEAGER: Jason.

(JASON goes upstage where the three men carry on a vigorous conversation while MEDEA crosses the deck looking and calling for APSYRTUS.)

MEDEA: Apsyrtus? Apsyrtus? Where are you?

(The men break apart. MELEAGER and CORONUS go below. JASON returns to MEDEA.)

Where did Apsyrtus go?

JASON: I don't know. He is around. Would you like to throw the dice again?

MEDEA: I should find him before he gets into more mischief.

JASON: He'll be all right. You can't keep him with you all the time. Besides, I like to have you to myself once in a while, and not always be interrupted by people and decisions and duties. I too wish that we could sail forever and never come to land.

MEDEA: No you don't; you don't envy my freedom at all. If that was what you wanted, that's what you would get. And whatever was in your way would be swept aside or dragged along behind.

JASON: You know me so well after so short a time?

MEDEA: I know you better than I seem to know myself.

JASON: Are you sorry that you came?

MEDEA: How could I not have come? It's as though everything in my life prepared me for that moment when I knew I could not help to kill you. I feel as though I didn't even have a chance.

JASON: Now it is you who are too serious.

MEDEA: I don't understand how we can be sharing the same destiny when I have all the freedom and you have all the responsibilities. I have become like the air—everywhere yet nowhere—without substance. Where are we headed, Jason?

JASON: To Iolcus. But first we must stop at Illyria.

MEDEA: No, I don't mean that. Where are *we* going; What are we doing to ourselves.

JASON: I don't understand you. We do what we must do.

MEDEA: Will there be a place for me in Iolcus?

JASON: Haven't I told you your place will be with me?

MEDEA: I want a place of my own—for Apsyrtus and me.

JASON: Why would you want such a place in a strange land?

MEDEA: I don't want to live like your slave. That freedom, that you think you envy so, suddenly seems like such an illusion. All your talk has made me realize how dependent I am upon you.

JASON: In Colchis you were dependent, too.

MEDEA: I performed a service there. My people and I were devoted to each other through our blood connection. You and I are only attached by mutual consent.

JASON: I am not going to abandon you, Medea. If you want a blood connection, we can have a child. We are held together through our love.

MEDEA: How many women have you loved, Jason?

JASON: None before you.

MEDEA: You were not a virgin.

JASON: My emotions were intact.

MEDEA: But you told other women that you loved them.

JASON: I thought I did. Now I know better.

MEDEA: When you tire of me, will you say to someone else you only thought you loved me?

JASON: How could I tire of you? You are never the same. Every day I wake to find a new Medea. You have cast a spell about me. When you're not at my side I can't remember how you look, or I remember all too well. I long to cool my fevered self within your deep recesses—yet when I do I feel you burning with a heat that matches mine. It is you who will leave me someday.

MEDEA: Why are we talking like this? I will never leave you. Never.

JASON: You deserve someone better than me.

MEDEA: Love me. Love me always.

(She throws herself in his arms. They are about to kiss when a cry, very short and piercing, is heard.)

What was that?

JASON: Nothing. A sea gull. See how they follow the ship. The cook must be throwing them scraps.

MEDEA: I have a chill. I was so happy just a little while ago, and now I feel alone. Apsyrtus! Where did he go?

JASON: You arc not alone, Medea. I am with you. You have been in the sun too long. Let us go below. Lunch will be ready soon.

(LIGHTS OUT)

ACT TWO

Scene One

(The deck of the *Argo*, which has just landed at Iolcus. It is two years later. At one side of the deck is a gangplank that leads to shore. It is shortly after dawn. MELEAGER is supervising the securing of the ship and its unloading. The ARGONAUTS are in good humor at the prospect of returning to their homes and leaving the ship behind.)

MELEAGER: (To ATALANTA) Jason wants every item accounted for before it leaves the ship.

(MEDEA enters from below. She hesitates, then crosses to MELEAGER.)

MEDEA: Why didn't Jason tell me he was going to see his uncle?

MELEAGER: So you're speaking to me once again. It's been a long time.

MEDEA: Answer me.

MELEAGER: You were asleep when we landed. He didn't wish to disturb you. (To ARGONAUTS) The grain is for Pelias. The trophies and gold will be shared out presently.

MEDEA: How long has he been gone?

MELEAGER: Only a few hours. He will be back soon. (To ATALANTA) How about it? Shall we go hunting next week?

ATALANTA: Yes. Oh, it's good to be home, Meleager.

MEDEA: Did he take the Fleece?

MELEAGER: Hurry it up, men. There's a lot of cargo to be unloaded. No, Medea. There was no need.

MEDEA: Then he will return.

MELEAGER: Of course he will return. He was impatient to see his kin and stand upon his homeland. He will be chief now.

MEDEA: He loves them more than he loves me.

MELEAGER: It's not the same.

MEDEA: You think I do not know the difference?

MELEAGER: You should tell your women to start your packing.

MEDEA: I had a homeland and blood kin. I know the hierarchy of affection. His loyalty will be to them. What will they think of me? How will they influence his passion? I have nothing anymore . . . only Jason . . . and our child.

MELEAGER: (To one of the WOMEN) Go and pack your mistress' belongings. You are still beautiful, Medea. He will not forsake you.

MEDEA: That's easy for you to say, Meleager. What do you know about it? It's been two years, and already he has tired of me. I have seen his eye wandering towards my handmaidens. Since Medeius was born I have hardly seen him at all. How is it possible on such a tiny ship that he could lose himself and hide from me? Why does he want to?

MELEAGER: He was not hiding from you. Making love is not a full-time occupation.

MEDEA: So I have learned.

MELEAGER: (To one of the ARGONAUTS) Watch what you're doing there, you clumsy fool. (To MEDEA) The captain of a ship has many things to do. He cannot always be with you.

MEDEA: Who did those things when we first set sail? For months he scarcely left my side. I remember one decision that was made for which Jason says he was not consulted.

MELEAGER: Perhaps you should have thought of all these things before you left Colchis. (To the ARGONAUTS) All those bags are tied too loose. Tighten them up.

MEDEA: You sang a different tune that day.

MELEAGER: I never pretended to be your friend, Medea. I did not trust you then, and I still fear your power.

MEDEA: You have never seen me commit an act that was not for Jason's benefit. I have stripped myself of home and kin, prestige, security—

even peace of mind. What must I do to build your respect—and Jason's? For I know he feels the same. What power do I have? The power of my body—which will age? The power of my mind—which goes unconsulted?

MELEAGER: The power of your witchcraft.

(MEDEA laughs, a little hysterically, and then drifts upstage to return to her cabin. MELEAGER turns back to the business of unloading the ship.)

You men, those sails need mending before they're stored away.

(Into this scene storms JASON. MEDEA begins to come forward when she first sees him, but seeing his black humor, she backs off and watches unobserved. JASON is slamming things about. MELEAGER approaches him. JASON is almost speechless with rage.)

JASON: He said . . . he said . . . I can not be chief!

MELEAGER: I don't understand.

JASON: There's nothing to understand. That's it. I can not be chief.

MELEAGER: But you brought back the Fleece. And Phrixus' bones. Doesn't he believe you? Does he want to see them?

JASON: Oh, he's coming here to see them in a little while. Everything in good order. He has to have his breakfast first.

MELEAGER: Well then . . .

JASON: It doesn't matter. That has nothing to do with it. He likes being chief and will not step down for me.

MELEAGER: I see.

JASON: Do you? Well, look sharply then and you'll see a lot of other things as well. Where's Medea?

MEDEA: I'm here, Jason.

JASON: You heard it all?

MEDEA: Yes.

JASON: They don't know about you. They weren't concerned with how I got the Fleece. They were too wrapped up in their self-contentment.

You'd think I'd just left yesterday. Barely a word! "Jason, my boy, good to see you again. How was your trip? Good weather?" Jason, my boy! Yes. Perhaps I was a boy when I left. But he'll find out I've learned a thing or two since then.

MELEAGER: What are you thinking of doing, Jason?

JASON: He's gotten old. His hair is thin; his belly paunched; his walk is slower and he doesn't see as well. He has an eye for women as before, but now they must come closer before he decides whether or not to feel their flesh. But he won't step down. He is too old to fight or even think of leading men, but he won't let go the reins!

MELEAGER: You're not thinking of fighting him?

JASON: I would not lower myself. But I will see him die.

MEDEA: He is your uncle, Jason!

MELEAGER: If you cause his death you will be outcast. You will not be chief.

JASON: There is no way that I'll be chief. But I'll have satisfaction.

MEDEA: You cannot commit a crime of blood against your kin.

JASON: *I* will not be the one to kill him.

MEDEA: You must not ask it of me, Jason.

JASON: Not to kill him, Medea. *They* will kill him. He will ask to be killed. But you must help me.

MEDEA: What do you want of me?

JASON: He wants to be the chief. He likes the role. He would go on forever being chief if he had his way. But he knows that death approaches and he's fearful of old age. He has surrounded himself with young women and fawning courtiers who assure him that he'll live a long, long while. He likes the thought.... We're going to get you dressed up in the Fleece, Medea. You'll be Hecate's high priestess in Iolcus, as I promised you. We'll tell him that you can restore his youth.

MEDEA: But I cannot.

JASON: We're going to tell him otherwise. We'll even give a demonstration how you'll do it. There's an old nanny goat on board the ship. We'll kill it right before his eyes and throw it in a pot and then after you mumble the appropriate magic words, out will come a kid.

MEDEA: I do not have the power to do such things!

JASON: You don't know the power that you have.

MELEAGER: Jason, you're distraught!

MEDEA: If I had such magic at my command, I would have used it for my brother!

JASON: There's no point in bringing that up now.

MEDEA: When your men dismembered him and threw him overboard, don't you think if I knew how I would have gathered up his bones and prayed him back to life?

JASON: What's done is done. The men only wanted to lose your father's ship, and they succeeded. I've said I'm sorry I don't know how many times. Let's not drag up the past.

MEDEA: I only want to point out that I'm not the practitioner of black magic you always seem to think I am. I don't have any ability to do more than brew a few herbs together to heal the sick.

JASON: I know that, Medea. But he doesn't. We'll get you all tricked out. He'll be alone, and as I said, his eyesight's growing dim. He'll see what we tell him he's seeing. We'll need that hollow statue of Artemis you have. And after he's seen the proof of your extraordinary power . . .

MELEAGER: What then, Jason?

JASON: Why, he'll beg to have us cut him up and throw him in a pot just like the goat.

MEDEA: I cannot do that! I won't!

JASON: You won't have to. We'll tell him that it will not work unless his own child brings his bones to you. The rest is up to him. He'll get his own daughters to kill him.

MEDEA: I do not recognize you, Jason.

JASON: You will do this for me, won't you, Medea? And afterwards we'll go away together. We'll both be outcasts then . . . homeless . . . bereft of kin. Only each other.

MEDEA: We'll both be outcasts.

JASON: Equals.

MEDEA: Will you love me once again?

JASON: I will always love you, Medea. Haven't I sworn it to the gods?

(LIGHTS OUT)

Scene Two

(Later that morning. PELIAS has arrived and is sitting on the deck, under an awning, with JASON and MELEAGER. ATALANTA and IPHITUS are putting on a wrestling show. The SERVING WOMEN pour wine and bring fruit. There is a folding screen in front of the stairway that leads to the interior of the ship.)

PELIAS: I must say, Jason, this is good wine you've brought us from Illyria. (He ogles and feels up the women whenever they come near.) I can't wait to see the rest of the cargo. It's a relief to find you coming 'round. I was a little worried. You understand, it's only for a year or two—until I retire. There were a lot of problems while you were away. And nobody remembers you too well. It's important in these unsettled times that we work out an effective transition in leadership. Can't move too fast about some of these things.

JASON: You seem to be getting around pretty well, Uncle, for someone your age. We didn't expect you for another hour or two. I thought with your game leg . . .

PELIAS: I manage. Can't let a little thing like age slow you down, my boy. You have to stay right in there with the young, keep your mind alert. Have to keep up the pace. Although sometimes I feel it more than I like to admit . . . Meleager was telling me that this witch you've brought back has unusual abilities.

JASON: Well, we've never really seen what she can do.

PELIAS: He said he saw her move a great stone altar with the touch of a finger.

JASON: He exaggerates.

MELEAGER: It's true.

PELIAS: He also said she's a looker.

JASON: Not my type.

PELIAS: Really? I heard she'd borne a son to you.

JASON: Well, you know how it is. Four years at sea, one lets one's standards down. And who's to know whose son he is.

PELIAS: Then you're not partial to her?

JASON: Frankly, Uncle, I'd always hoped one of your daughters would someday share her bed with me.

PELIAS: Yes. Yes. That would be a good match. You're very wise, my boy. I've always said you had a good head on your shoulders. Stay within the tribe. It's all right to amuse yourself with barbarian women, but look what happens to their children. They don't belong anywhere. Trouble makers. Now Alcestis is a very devoted daughter. Just the bride for you. And it would certainly help your claim to be chief when I finally pass away.

(Two of MEDEA's WOMEN enter and take positions at either end of the folding screen.)

JASON: Ah! Medea is ready to be presented, Uncle.

(JASON nods to the women, who each take an end of the screen, fold it up and remove it. MEDEA is revealed with her back to the group and the audience, wearing the Fleece as a cape. The ram's head becomes a hood on the back of her head. Her arms are outstretched to the sky, a position which fully displays the Fleece's brilliance. She stands this way briefly, as though in prayer, and then turns, but does not come downstage to JASON. Her dress is of gold lamé, and where it ends and the Fleece begins is hard to determine. She shimmers in the sunlight. In the shadow of the awning the dazzle becomes subdued. JASON is forced to go to MEDEA and bring her forward.)

JASON: Uncle, I would like to present Hecate's high priestess from Colchis. Medea, this is my father's brother, Pelias.

PELIAS: My dear, it is a great honor. We do not often have visitors from so far away—and when they come as you do, having saved my favorite nephew, so I hear, from Aeetes' warriors—and even a dragon—I hope you will stay with us a while.

MEDEA: Indeed, I had hoped to settle here.

PELIAS: Well . . . . Well, we shall see what we can arrange . . . . You understand, sometimes it's a little difficult, the other women get very jealous. Still, if you had the protection of someone of importance, like myself . . . (PELIAS pats her on the knee.)

JASON: Medea is not free to return to her home since she defied Aeetes. He would never forgive her.

MEDEA: It is my brother's death he would not forgive. Nor will I.

PELIAS: Your brother's death?

JASON: An accident at sea.

MEDEA: It was deliberate! One of my women told me what happened. While Jason and I were eating lunch, some of the men killed him. They cut him up and dropped the pieces overboard. All through the afternoon they scattered him upon the waves. Aeetes' fleet came to a halt and stopped pursuing us to fish Apsyrtus from the sea and take him home for burial. At least he has a home and does not wander endlessly—as I seem destined to.

PELIAS: I understand. Awful not to have a home. (He gives her knee a squeeze.) Phrixus and his dreadful haunting of my sleep have demonstrated that to me. Thank the gods—and you, Jason—and you, too, Medea—that he'll now be buried properly and I can get a good night's sleep. Do you know, I think it's been over six years since I've slept the night through? Every midnight there he was, standing at the foot of my bed, it didn't matter who was with me, he yammered away about how he couldn't stand all those barbarians—no offense, Medea—but you understand, one is more comfortable with one's own kind. And the thought of spending eternity with strangers! Well, my heart just went out to Phrixus, standing there, telling me all the dreadful things your people do. I mean, even if he hadn't been so persistent and come EVERY night, I wouldn't have left him over there. You know that, Jason. It would have demeaned my role as chief to so neglect a kinsman.

MEDEA: Yes. I understand. My people feel the same towards the Greeks.

PELIAS: Well . . . . I don't know . . .

JASON: Medea has been promising a show of her magic. Her power is renowned throughout the Black Sea, but every time we begged for a small demonstration she put us off, saying she would perform only before the great chief of Iolcus.

PELIAS: My dear. I would be delighted. What kind of tricks do you perform? Can you do rabbits out of a hood, and all that sort of thing? (His hand has come permanently to rest on her thigh.)

MEDEA: Would you really like to see something like that?

PELIAS: Me dear, if you can do such magic, your place is secure within my court. I'd be the envy of every chief for miles around. How they would come to visit me for their amusement. Mind you, they'd make you tempting offers to go elsewhere, but I know you're loyal to Jason and would feel the same towards his uncle, wouldn't you? There'd be a lot of spite and backbiting you'd have to put up with. The important thing to remember is that I'll protect you. Oh, we shall have such grand entertainments. Show me something. Show me what you can do.

MEDEA: I will show you how I can restore youth to the aged. (PELIAS gasps.) For that I need an old goat. (To her WOMEN) Fetch me the goat. And I will need the altar of Artemis.

(MEDEA's movements, now that she is out of the awning's shadow, are sometimes blinding as her golden dress reflects the sun.)

PELIAS: (To JASON) Can she really do such a thing?

JASON: I don't think she'd attempt it if it were not possible.

(The goat is brought on stage, along with the hollow statue of Artemis which contains a baby kid. Also an altar and a large golden urn. The goat is placed upon the altar.)

MEDEA: (To PELIAS) It is necessary that the person wishing to see the regeneration plunge in the knife.

(She extends a dagger to PELIAS. He takes it in a daze and follows her to the altar. The WOMEN form a ring around PELIAS, MEDEA and the altar. Raising their arms, they link hands. The sleeves of their robes drape down to the deck and form a screen which shields the altar from view. PELIAS' arm raises and plunges the knife downward.)

WOMEN:
Slay and slash
Stab and smash
Sunder, split and slice.

See if something sweet as life
Is sealed in senseless, savage strife.

(The WOMEN drop their arms as PELIAS and MEDEA together lift the goat, now wrapped in the cloth that draped the altar, into the urn. PELIAS looks down into its depths.)

MEDEA: (To PELIAS) Your part is done.

(PELIAS returns to sit beside JASON. When he has seated himself, the WOMEN throw up their arms again to shield MEDEA as she prays to the goddess and switches the kid and the goat.)

PELIAS: (To JASON) I looked in the urn. There wasn't anything else in there.

WOMEN:
Gods and goddesses under the sun
Do the deeds that man wants done.
If the gods can't answer man,
Then he sees if women can.

Women old and women young
Work their miracles unsung:
All their labor, craft and plan
Go to glorify some man.

(The WOMEN drop their arms as MEDEA reaches into the urn and raises up the kid, which kicks and squirms.)

PELIAS: She did it.

(PELIAS rushes up to look into the urn. He compares the inside depth with the outside, but there is no hollow bottom. He feels the kid. Then he takes the kid and hugs it before giving it to one of the WOMEN, who takes it offstage.)

She really did it! Do you know what this means, Jason? Medea, can you do that to people?

MEDEA: Only to the truly brave.

PELIAS: How does one know if one is truly brave?

MEDEA: Only the truly brave will conquer their fear and submit themselves to the knife.

PELIAS: Then I will join that select group! Medea, if you will perform that ritual on me, I shall establish you permanently at Iolcus. Let them talk. You will have your own house and land. I will build a temple to whatever goddess you wish.

MEDEA: The men of Iolcus seem remarkably eager to promise the building of temples.

PELIAS: Jason, this is marvelous! Did you ever see such magic? I had no idea such deeds could be performed.

JASON: Nor did I.

PELIAS: What's the matter with you? What are you sulking about?

JASON: Beware of witches with such powers.

PELIAS: By Apollo, Jason, I don't know what to make of you. You were the one who brought her here and now you seem displeased. Medea, when can we do this? Oh, I can't wait. Can we do it now? You have your whole ritual set up. Why can't we do it right now?

MEDEA: I am your servant. But it is necessary that someone who wishes to see you regenerated plunge in the knife.

PELIAS: Well, that's easy enough. Jason is right here. He'll do it for me.

JASON: No. Not I. What if something went wrong? I tell you I don't trust her.

PELIAS: What are you saying? Surely, Jason you are not the one who is afraid? I take the whole responsibility upon myself. All of these people act as my witness. Now, if I'm brave enough to go through with it, you must bear up, too. After all, I'm the one who takes the risk.

JASON: Think of what's at stake. Anyway, I can't do it. It's supposed to be done by someone who wants to see you young again.

PELIAS: What's that? What do you mean?

JASON: Nothing. I didn't mean anything.

PELIAS: You're still upset because I won't step down as chief. You think if I regain my youth, you'll never get your turn. That's it, isn't it?

JASON: No. I didn't mean it the way it sounded.

PELIAS: Oh, yes you did. Too bad you haven't learned to control yourself a little better, Jason. Chiefs can't afford to let their feelings get the better of them. You're a good fighter, but you're just a little too ambitious for my taste. Medea, you wait here. I'm going home and it won't be more than an hour before someone returns with my old bones wrapped up and ready for your magic touch.

MEDEA: Jason . . .

PELIAS: Don't pay any attention to him, Medea. He knows when he's licked. And if he doesn't, why once I'm young and strong again, I'll take him on—and all the other cocksure upstarts who've been sitting around waiting for me to keel over. I'll show them. And I'll show you, too. We'll have great times together, you and I. Why, you won't recognize me when you take me out of that pot of yours. You sit right here and before the day is through you'll be installed as the highest priestess in Iolcus. I'll go find someone to do the job. Those girls of mine will do it or get the thrashing of their lives. No. No, it must be someone who wants to see me young. Well, then, I'll tell them when they see it done to me, they'll know they'll never have to grow old themselves. Women are so vain. How old are you, my beauty? I'll bet you're two hundred if you're a day and some old witch of a grandmother has been rejuvenating you for years. Well, the cat's out of the bag now. Wait'll I tell . . . well, we'll see about that later. First things first. Wait here. Don't move. And don't listen to anything that nephew of mine tells you. He's through!

(PELIAS leaves.)

MEDEA: Did I really leave my home for this?

JASON: Medea.

MEDEA: I am ill, Jason. I feel sick.

JASON: Don't worry about it. He's a stupid old man. You could see that. If he dies it's his own doing.

MEDEA: No! If he dies it's our doing. Let's be honest with ourselves at least, even if he is stupid.

JASON: All right, Medea, all right. Anyway, it sure startled him when you said you needed an old goat. He is an old goat, you know.

(JASON begins to put on a little show for the ARGONAUTS standing around, mimicking and exaggerating the old man's fatuous behavior.)

"How old are you, my beauty? We'll have great times together, you and I. I'll bet you're two hundred if you're a day."

(JASON sees MEDEA standing alone and desolate. He goes to her.)

There, there. I'll make it up to you, Medea, I promise. Everything will be all right. We'll go away. Tonight. After they bring us the old man's bones.

(LIGHTS OUT)

ACT THREE

Scene One

(Twelve years later than ACT ONE. The Great Hall in the fortress at Corinth. JASON and IPHITUS are drinking, laughing, and reminiscing.)

IPHITUS: And then . . . remember? . . . there were those crazy women on Lemnos who'd killed all their own men? Remember them?

(CORONUS enters.)

CORONUS: Jason.

JASON: Coronus! (They embrace.)

CORONUS: You haven't changed a bit.

JASON: A little thinner on top and fatter below. Iphitus is here, too.

CORONUS: Iphitus.

IPHITUS: Good to see you again.

CORONUS: What have you been doing? Have they made you chief yet?

JASON: Next week.

CORONUS: Really?

IPHITUS: By Apollo! I always knew you'd make it.

JASON: Have some wine, Coronus.

IPHITUS: We were just talking about old times and those sex-starved women on the Island of Lemnos.

JASON: They were afraid we'd come to punish them.

IPHITUS: And we thought they were Amazons. What a port for rest and recreation that turned out to be. Remember . . . what was her name, Jason . . . the dark one who didn't want you to leave?

JASON: Hypsipyle.

IPHITUS: Hypsipyle. That's right. What a beauty. You'd probably still be there if Heracles hadn't beaten down your door and dragged you back to the ship.

CORONUS: Did you ever go back? I heard she gave birth to twins.

JASON: No. No, I never went back.

IPHITUS: You always had all the luck with women. Take Medea. You couldn't have done a thing without her, and she just fell into your lap, nice as could be. Whatever happened to her?

JASON: She's here.

CORONUS: Here?

IPHITUS: In Corinth?

JASON: In this house.

IPHITUS: Aren't you marrying Glauce tomorrow?

CORONUS: What's she doing here?

JASON: She's dragging her heels about leaving. That's why I invited you to the wedding. She's giving me a hard time about this new marriage. I have to publicly repudiate her. But I need some witnesses that her father never gave his blessing and we weren't officially married. I thought you knew. I thought everybody knew by now.

CORONUS: No. News doesn't travel very fast up north.

IPHITUS: All I got word of was the wedding.

JASON: Have some more wine. Coronus?

CORONUS: Yes. Well, there's certainly no question of Aeetes having given you his blessing. His curse would be more like it.

IPHITUS: What's she like now, Jason? By the gods, she was gorgeous.

JASON: Older . . . like the rest of us.

IPHITUS: Where will she go? Aeetes would never take her back.

CORONUS: What a witch she was. Remember how she wouldn't speak to any of us when she found out we'd killed her brother? Two years—and not a word to anyone other than you and her women.

IPHITUS: She found her tongue quick enough that morning when she thought you'd left her.

CORONUS: You afraid of what she's going to do now? You think she's brewing up some way to get back at you?

JASON: Medea wouldn't do that. It's not her style.

CORONUS: No? Don't be too sure about that. If you ask me, she spent those two years in her cabin laying a curse on all of us. Almost the whole crew is dead now. And not one of us ever got what he went after.

IPHITUS: Old wives' tales. Hey, Jason. You think you could fix me up with her? She must have forgotten all that old history. What's she going to do all by herself? She'll need a friend, won't she? I can see her now, that first day on the ship, dancing like a sunbeam on the deck.

JASON: She's not a young girl anymore, Iphitus.

IPHITUS: I could pretend—for one night. I always wanted her.

(CREON enters.)

CREON: Jason!

JASON: Iphitus, Coronus, this is my prospective father-in-law, Creon. Creon, these are two of my former shipmates from the *Argo.* Iphitus and Coronus. They've come to attend the wedding and bear witness for me.

IPHITUS: An honor.

CREON: Yes. Glad you could come. There don't seem to be many of you still around. Jason spent a lot of time tracking you down.

CORONUS: We were just discussing that. In my opinion it's the witch's doing. Look at what happened to Meleager.

IPHITUS: Yes. That was sad. Did you hear about that, Jason? He had a seizure. He and Atalanta and a number of others went on a wild boar hunt. Atalanta got the boar—in more ways than one. After all those years, Meleager finally tumbled her in the bushes. The very next day he dropped dead. The excitement was too much for him, I guess.

CORONUS: Well, doesn't that seem strange to you?

IPHITUS: I don't know. I certainly don't see how you can blame Medea. There were lots of people closer to home who had it in for Meleager at that point. His wife was in a terrible rage. And Atalanta got pregnant and had to marry someone she didn't love. I hear she's miserable.

CORONUS: I tell you it's a curse. Because of what we did to her brother. I don't like being in the same house with her.

CREON: Coronus. I wonder if you and Iphitus would do me a favor. I want to discuss the marriage contract with Jason, but I'm expecting my daughter, Glauce. Would you wait for her in the courtyard and escort her in when she comes?

CORONUS: Of course.

IPHITUS: We'd be delighted.

CREON: She should be along soon.

JASON: And then we'll all sit down together and have some lunch.

(IPHITUS and CORONUS exit.)

CREON: I knew I couldn't trust you to get rid of her. Why is she still here.

JASON: They're packing her things now.

CREON: You never should have invited Glauce into the house when you knew she would be here. It's an ill omen.

JASON: What was I to do? Glauce wanted to look around. I couldn't put her off when she insisted. The wedding's tomorrow.

CREON: Be careful, Jason. Glauce's not some foreign witch without a father or people to defend her. I won't have her drawn into your manipulations and abused. We can postpone the wedding.

JASON: I don't want it postponed any longer.

CREON: Have a little patience, Jason.

JASON: Patience! For ten years every word I've spoken has been chosen with great care. I never smiled without a purpose. All my emotions have been disciplined or denied. Now I want my reward. Iphitus and Coronus will testify that Aeetes never placed Medea in my custody; she's not my responsibility. I'll marry Glauce tomorrow and the Council will confirm me as chief next week.

CREON: There'll be no wedding until Medea's gone. That's final. It's not too late for me to find another husband for Glauce, you know. You really don't have any ties to Corinth once Medea's out of the way except through me and my daughter.

JASON: But Medea's not out of the way yet, is she?

CREON: So. Jason, this is no way to begin a partnership. With distrust between us.

JASON: If I'm to trust you, you have to be prepared to give somewhere. You want the chieftainship for yourself too much.

CREON: And what do you propose?

JASON: Nothing new. The territory will be united, which is what you want the most. With me married to Glauce, it will be under your blood line, only I'll be chief.

CREON: And Medea?

JASON: Medea doesn't leave until the marriage has been consummated. As you just reminded me, she's all I have till then.

CREON: You'd back Medea's claim at this late date?

JASON: I've learned a lot from you, Creon. About patience. And how to manipulate. How to set things in motion.

CREON: When you set things in motion, my boy, you'd better be prepared for the consequences.

JASON: Don't patronize me.

CREON: Medea's claim has no support here any longer. Her foreignness has isolated her. Sometimes the people of Corinth even wonder about your long association with her and her pagan witch cult, Jason. Now I appreciate everything you've done so far and I'm prepared to reward it. You're right. I don't want our unity destroyed. But I don't want any question about who's in command here, either. Glauce has come of age, and I have to make my move. It's up to you which way you go, whether you want to be chief or not. But Medea leaves today.

JASON: She doesn't have a place to go. What am I supposed to do—throw her out into the streets?

CREON: I spoke to the Council yesterday about a farewell gift. I'll see that they make suitable arrangements. They'll find a place for her.

JASON: And if she won't go? Getting rid of witches isn't easy.

CREON: I'm aware of that.

(IPHITUS and CORONUS enter.)

CORONUS: Creon.

CREON: Where is Glauce?

CORONUS: She arrived before we got there. She'd told the servants not to bother you; she knew you had some business to discuss. Someone is showing her around the house.

(LIGHTS OUT)

Scene Two

(MEDEA's room in the fortress at Corinth. MEDEA and her WOMEN are busy packing. The Fleece is draped across one of the couches. The CHILDREN run through, playing tag, screaming, laughing, and tumbling over each other in high good nature.)

MEDEA: Please! Can't I ever have a little peace and quiet around here? (Everything comes to a halt.) I'm sorry. Go outside and play.

(The CHILDREN leave.)

(To the WOMEN) We need to pack the children's clothes. Go and ask them to bring some containers. (No one moves.) Well, what are you waiting for?

WOMAN: They won't give us anything any more, Medea. It does no good for us to ask for them.

MEDEA: Very well. I'll go order them myself.

(MEDEA leaves. She has been gone only briefly when a WOMAN enters followed by GLAUCE.)

WOMAN: These will be your rooms.

(GLAUCE looks around diffidently until she sees the Fleece. She goes to it and picks it up admiringly, and appears about ready to put it on. This makes her WOMAN nervous. As the WOMAN speaks, MEDEA reenters the room.)

We should not stay too long, Glauce. Lunch will be ready soon.

MEDEA: What are you doing here? Couldn't you even wait until I was gone?

(The WOMAN backs out of the room and goes for help, followed by MEDEA's WOMEN who sense disaster.)

GLAUCE: Oh, I'm sorry. I thought that you were out.

MEDEA: And that gave you the right to prowl around my chambers? Did you think because you now have Jason that everything else is yours also?

GLAUCE: No. I really didn't mean to offend you. Jason said I could look around.

MEDEA: Yes. I imagine he did. He's always been very good at setting up these little scenes that move everything along in the direction he desires.

GLAUCE: I'm sure he didn't know you were here.

MEDEA: Perhaps not.

(They stare at each other.)

GLAUCE: It's nice to have met you. I'll leave you alone now.

MEDEA: (Laughs) Oh, that's marvelous. "It's nice to have met you. Let me cut out your heart." No! Stay! Stay here with me. I'd like to know what you're like now that you're here. You don't mind, do you?

GLAUCE: I suppose not.

MEDEA: It seems impossible. I must have been young and accommodating once. You are accommodating, aren't you? And innocent. Are you innocent?

GLAUCE: I don't think I should stay.

MEDEA: Yes, you're innocent. Jason likes that, I'm sure. What's the matter?

GLAUCE: The way you said that. "Jason." I never pictured you before, like this, saying "Jason" as though you knew him.

MEDEA: You thought Jason and I were strangers?

GLAUCE: You think I'm stupid.

MEDEA: No. Just young.

GLAUCE: Somehow people you haven't met don't seem real. And if they're strangers to you, you think they're strangers to each other, even if you know they've met. Does that make sense?

MEDEA: Yes.

GLAUCE: Is that the Golden Fleece? Jason told me how he won it for you. That he had to tame a dragon and perform chores for your father. It's beautiful—like you are. I'm sorry that I've hurt you.

MEDEA: It's Jason who's hurt me. You've hurt yourself—but you don't know it yet.

GLAUCE: Jason never meant to hurt you.

MEDEA: Didn't he? It's amazing. All the people in the world who act upon each other as though they are unconscious. No awareness of the effect they have on others they don't see until one day they run you over. "Oh, I'm sorry," they say, "but you shouldn't be standing in the road like that." "But you brought me here," you reply, "and chained me to the spot and then you went and got a horse and ran me down." "Did I do that?" they ask. "I never meant to."

GLAUCE: You're upset.

MEDEA: Of course I'm upset! What kind of an unfeeling fool do you think I am? But I don't blame you. I blame Jason—and your father—and ALL the men in Corinth, for that matter!

GLAUCE: You don't have to yell. It doesn't help.

MEDEA: Maybe it doesn't help the situation, but it helps *me!* It keeps me from going mad.

GLAUCE: You really love him so much?

MEDEA: Love him? Jason and I haven't loved each other for a long, long time. We have been bound to each other. Love demands freedom and choice. Love lost the room and air in which to breathe the moment I left Colchis and became dependent upon Jason.

GLAUCE: That's what he said, too.

MEDEA: Did he? It's nice to know we agree on something.

GLAUCE: If you don't love him anymore, and he doesn't love you, why are you so angry that he loves me. You don't want to be tied to someone you hate, do you?

MEDEA: Listen to me! I don't care who he loves, or who I love, but he has cast me out! Where am I to go? Have you ever thought of that? When the two of you lay in each other's arms and discussed how abused he is, how I don't understand him any longer, did you ever spend two seconds thinking about what *you* would do with seven children and no place to go?

GLAUCE: Jason said you were a witch. That witches have their ways.

MEDEA: How convenient for you both. And do you think that I was born a witch? Where do witches come from, do you suppose? Watch out! Perhaps he'll turn you into a witch—like he did me.

GLAUCE: You're trying to frighten me. Jason didn't turn you into a witch. You were practising black magic on a mountain when he met you.

MEDEA: I was Hecate's high priestess! Look at me now. Nothing sacred about me anymore, is there? What makes you think it's going to be any different for you? What are you going to do when he casts you out?

GLAUCE: This is my home. No one can cast me out.

MEDEA: Oh, yes. That's right. I'm the odd one in the world. I cast myself out. He seems to have told you about so many things. Did he tell you about his promise? "I will never cast you out, Medea. I swear it by all the gods and goddesses on Mount Olympus." There is . . . there should be . . . such a thing as honor.

GLAUCE: You cast a spell over him.

MEDEA: (Begins to laugh, ironically at first, but as events develop she becomes slightly hysterical and her laugh at times becomes almost a sob. This continues through the next ten speeches.)

Oh, I shall go mad. Truly, I shall go mad.

(There is a commotion at the door.)

CREON: (Offstage) Where is she?

(CREON enters, followed by JASON.)

Glauce! (To JASON) What a stupid thing to do. Glauce, what are you doing here? This is most unfortunate. (To MEDEA) I beg your pardon, Madam. It was an accident. (To GLAUCE) Is everything all right?

GLAUCE: I don't know, Father, I have upset her.

CREON: It looks to me more like she has upset you. Such a troubled face before your wedding.

JASON: What have you been saying to her, Medea?

(MEDEA is still laughing, trying to catch her breath, half sobbing.)

(To GLAUCE) You can see she's not right in her head.

GLAUCE: But, Jason, she said such things I'd never thought about before.

JASON: What things?

GLAUCE: Like, what's to become of her? Where is she to go? And her children—your children?

JASON: Do you want her to stay here? With us? Is that what you want?

GLAUCE: No. But . . .

CREON: (He begins to try to ease GLAUCE out of the room.): Glauce, hush. Hush. You are too young to understand these things. She exaggerates. It's not as bad as she makes out. We shouldn't be here. You're right, it has upset her. Come away.

MEDEA: (Pulling herself together.) That's right. Pay no attention to me. I'll make out. I wouldn't want to spoil your wedding day. What's it to you if he deserts me and his children? Doesn't that tell you something about the man you love?

(CREON succeeds in getting GLAUCE out of the room.)

JASON: Shut up. If you could see how ugly you become when you scream like that. Little wonder I've looked elsewhere for some warmth and understanding.

MEDEA: I didn't coax her in here. You sent her in, for whatever devious reason.

JASON: She thought that you were out.

MEDEA: No. You wanted me to see her. You thought that if I saw her I would hate you more.

JASON: I didn't! I swear I didn't.

MEDEA: Don't swear. It's become so meaningless.

JASON: I don't want you to hate me, Medea.

MEDEA: No, I don't expect you do. I'll bet you're still a little bit afraid of me and of my witchcraft.

JASON: It's not your witchcraft. You still have power over me. You always will.

MEDEA: You're such a child, Jason.

JASON: Why do you say that?

MEDEA: You want it all. You want Glauce, and you don't know what to do with me. You want me and you don't want me. You want to be chief here in Corinth, but you're not sure you want to pay the price for it. If I told you I could make you young again, I'll bet you'd let me chop you up and throw you in a pot!

JASON: Don't mock me. There's nothing wrong with a man trying to make a place for himself in the world.

MEDEA: At whose expense?

JASON: Let's not start all over again today, Medea. I came to see if there was something I could do, and to say goodbye to the children. Where are they?

MEDEA: I sent them out.

JASON: Out where?

MEDEA: Out. In the street. To play.

JASON: I don't like them out in the street alone.

MEDEA: They play there every day. Is something the matter?

JASON: No. I'll send them back in when I leave. It won't hurt for them to stay indoors for one day. Do you know where you're going yet?

MEDEA: To Athens. Aegeus has said he'll take me in.

JASON: That old man?

MEDEA: You only think of one thing, don't you?

JASON: Why else would he give you refuge?

MEDEA: He owes me a favor.

JASON: When did you ever do anything for Aegeus?

MEDEA: You're throwing me out and you still carry on as though I belonged to you.

JASON: Well, I'm just glad to know that I wasn't the only one playing around.

MEDEA: I was never unfaithful to you. You wish you had that to use against me, don't you? I prescribed some medicine for Aegeus once when he stopped in Corinth. When it worked he sent me a message that he was in my debt. I wrote him that I need a place to go and he's sent word that I'll be welcome there.

JASON: Well, at least now you know where you're going.

MEDEA: Not that it would have made any difference to you if I didn't. I can understand how you feel about me, Jason. What I don't understand is how you can turn your back on our children.

JASON: They'll be all right. I know you. You'll make out. Medea, I'm not a young man anymore. I can't just go out into the wilderness again and make my way. They want me to be chief here. But the Corinthians are afraid of you and of your magic.

MEDEA: Who told them about my magic?

JASON: All right. Maybe I bragged too much, but I can't undo the past. They know you're not a Greek and they don't trust you.

MEDEA: They would have accepted me. They know that I have ancestors who came from Corinth, just like Glauce. We never would have come here if it hadn't been for me.

JASON: They've made their choice.

MEDEA: How did you argue when it came up in the Council, Jason? Or were you too busy thinking what fun it would be to have a new young wife along with being chief?

JASON: What does it matter? We don't want to be with each other anymore, Medea. Let's not part enemies. We've been through so much together. Can't we be friends?

MEDEA: Sometimes I think I've never really known you. Such shallowness.

JASON: You are exasperating!

MEDEA: Jason, listen. I've seen Glauce. She's a sweet child. She would take pity on the children and let them stay. I know she would if you'd ask her. Perhaps I can take care of myself, but I worry about what will happen to the boys. They need you.

JASON: You don't understand, it wouldn't work. There is a lot of feeling running against you right now. It gets taken out on them.

(A WOMAN enters with a golden crown on a pillow.)

WOMAN: A messenger has just brought this for you, Medea. He said it's a farewell present from the people of Corinth for the many services you've performed here.

JASON: It's beautiful, Medea. Take it and put it on.

MEDEA: (Turns away from it.) Hypocrites.

(The WOMAN puts the crown on the couch next to the Fleece and leaves.)

JASON: It's over then?

MEDEA: I wish it were that simple. You never look back, do you, Jason? Why don't you go. There's nothing you can do here.

(As JASON moves towards the door, the sound of women wailing and screaming is heard from offstage. The WOMEN enter carrying two of the CHILDREN. JASON is swept back into the room.)

What is it? What's wrong? What's happened to the children?

(MEDEA and JASON pluck at the coverings around the CHILDREN.)

What's wrong with them? Why don't they move?

WOMAN: They are dead, Medea.

(MEDEA runs frantically from one child to the other.)

JASON: No!

MEDEA: NOOOOOOO!

(MEDEA takes her youngest in her arms, rocking it, hugging it, crying.)

(To JASON) You have done this!

JASON: No, Medea, you are mistaken.

MEDEA: Yes. Yes. You, and your ambition to be chief. At all costs you must be chief. Look now at who has paid the price.

JASON: Pull yourself together, woman. By the gods above, would I have my own sons stoned?

MEDEA: It was you who stirred up the people against me. All those stories about how I was a barbarian and my children were barbarians. It is you who are barbaric!

JASON: Medea, I never thought . . .

MEDEA: No, you never thought! You simply did what you wanted to do when you wanted to do it. And I went along with you. May Artemis forgive me, I helped you do it.

(MEDEA takes her child's hand in hers and kisses it.)

Such long, thin fingers. The hand of a musician.

(Pause)

Tell me, Jason, just this one last time, did you know they were going to kill my brother?

JASON: How you must hate me.

MEDEA: No more than I have come to hate myself.

JASON: Yes, Medea, I knew. I gave the order.

(MEDEA assimilates this. Then she straightens and hands her dead child to a WOMAN.)

MEDEA: Put the children on litters. We will take them with us and bury them elsewhere. Bring the other children in and get them ready. We are leaving now. We will take only what is already packed.

JASON: You can't leave now. Wait until tomorrow.

MEDEA: No. I've waited too long already

JASON: It isn't safe out there.

MEDEA: Is it safe in here with you, Jason? Was I ever safe with you?

(MEDEA throws a plain, woolen cape over her shoulders, ignoring the Fleece on the couch, and begins shepherding everyone out the door.)

JASON: The Fleece. Don't you want to take the Fleece?

MEDEA: It was never I who wanted the Fleece. It was you—and Aeetes—and Pelias. Why do "things" mean so much to you? Don't you ever think about the people who are involved? Give it to your new bride.

JASON: Medea. Forgive me. (She does not pause.) You are a priestess!

(MEDEA leaves. JASON moves around the room slowly. He fingers a scarf, brings it to his face and smells it. GLAUCE comes in.)

GLAUCE: Jason! Where is Medea?

JASON: She has gone.

GLAUCE: I heard two of your children were killed. Is it true?

JASON: Yes.

GLAUCE: Oh, how awful for you. Oh, Jason. Why?

JASON: People can do terrible things sometimes.

GLAUCE: But why?

JASON: I don't know.

GLAUCE: I'm not sure I want to live with people who can do such things.

JASON: Don't you?

GLAUCE: Do you? Father spent all day yesterday with the Council trying to smooth things over. He said he got them to make a golden crown as a peace offering, and then they go and do something like this. I know she seemed kind of strange—because she was a barbarian—but there was something about her I liked. And the children never hurt anyone. Will she be all right? Did she have a place to go?

JASON: She went to Athens.

GLAUCE: She didn't take the crown. Look, she left it behind. And the Fleece. Poor thing. She must have been terrified to leave in such a hurry that she forgot them. We'll send them to Athens to her.

JASON: She said she didn't want them.

(GLAUCE picks up the Fleece and begins to put it on.)

GLAUCE: She doesn't want it? How could you not want something so beautiful? Look, Jason.

JASON: Take it off.

GLAUCE: But if she doesn't want it, can't I have it?

JASON: I said TAKE IT OFF!

GLAUCE: You loved her, didn't you? You still love her.

JASON: Who knows what love is?

GLAUCE: You said you loved me. I won't take it off. I'll make you love me. (She picks up the crown.) You can't be chief unless you marry me—unless you love me. Look at me, Jason. I am the new gyne. Aren't I beautiful?

(GLAUCE places the crown on her head. A startled look comes on her face and she screams. As she reaches up to try to remove the crown, CREON enters followed by IPHITUS and CORONUS.)

CREON: The crown! Take off that crown! It's poisoned!

(Blood has begun to trickle down her face and hair. GLAUCE falters and sways. She is unable to disentangle the crown from her head.)

GLAUCE: I can't get it off! It's stuck! It's full of thorns! Help me! Father! Help me!

(Wherever she takes hold of the crown to pull it off, her hand is pierced by the poisoned thorns on the inside of the crown. The Golden Fleece glitters in the light like a flame that is consuming her as she weaves around the stage. CREON tries to snatch the crown from her head, but his hand, too, is pierced by the poisoned thorns. They become locked in a macabre embrace, the Fleece wrapped around them and dancing like fire.)

CREON: This is Medea's work!

(He struggles to hold GLAUCE erect. With a wrench he pulls the crown from her head, but his hand is impaled. He screams.)

Medea has done this! Medea!

(His strength gives out and he collapses with GLAUCE, the Golden Fleece spreading out over their bodies. JASON and the others have been standing, frozen in horror.)

JASON: Medea.

(Then in a scream of anguish at all his collapsed dreams.)

MEDEA!

(The flame on the Fleece quivers and goes out.)

(LIGHTS OUT)

CONTRIBUTORS

ANDREA ABBOTT joined the Women Writers' Workshop at SUNY/Buffalo at the invitation of a fellow-worker at a local pharmaceutical plant; she has had no previous experience as a writer. A graduate of Antioch College, she is currently completing work for an M.A. in the School of Information and Library Science at Buffalo. Asked what participation in the Workshop meant to her, she replied succintly, "It meant that I wrote."

GLORIA ALBEE is now a senior at the University of Washington. Twenty-five years ago she completed her freshman year at Boston University. She writes, "I love going back to school, and I frequently feel that my women's studies classes are all that keep me going through some of the others."

BECKY BIRTHA, a Black poet of 26, is a 1973 graduate of SUNY/Buffalo. She designed her own major in "Children's Studies" and now works as a teacher in a community center pre-school. After two and a half years in the Women Writers' Workshop, she left to found a mixed, community-based workshop which she now initiates.

NANCY BLACK writes, "I have a disgusting dead-end state job, I dream a lot, I live with a lover, two cats, three dogs, and a million houseplants." She is a witch, a pre-initiate in the Dianic and Celtic traditions of Mother-Goddess religions. She writes poems, some of which have been published, and plays, some of which have been performed.

LOIS BUESCHER is "middle-aged, twice divorced" and has "guided two boys and a girl toward maturity (I think!)." She writes: "I came to Berkeley five years ago, telling my kids they were on their own. They loved it. The women's movement has . . . given me the impetus to do and be what I must have been all of my life--a writer . . . since I know at last who I am, I like myself and am more able to share my life and growth in a truly androgynous woman-man relationship." Now a secretary at UC Berkeley, she intends to become part-time secretary and full-time writer very soon.

LESLIE J. CALMAN writes: "I recently graduated from Barnard College with a major in political science. My diversion from exams, term papers, and extracurricular activities aimed at getting peace for Vietnam, McGovern for America, welfare for the needy, and Union lettuce for all was traditional folk and topical music." She is now a graduate student in political science at Columbia, but readily confesses that she would not mind a stint as a famous though humble radical folksinger.

JODY DANIELS is now a third-year law student at UCLA, but she has taken a year off to get some practical experience working at the Citizens Communication Center in Washington, D.C. She writes that she has "mellowed a bit" since the writing of the poem included here.

IFUEKO M. EGHAREVBA is a Nigerian student at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. She is married and a mother. Mary Anne Ferguson writes, "She was so encouraged by the Images course that she is now taking Creative Writing and doing very well."

ELIZABETH JACKSON, 25, holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from UCLA and an M.A. from Meharry Medical College and Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. A native Californian, she grew up in the Los Angeles area and now teaches in the Black Studies Department at California State University, Long Beach. She also has an interest in broadcast journalism. At heart, she is more than anything a poet and has been seriously writing for the last four years.

M. CATHERINE KENNARD: (See preface to her essay.)

ELLEN BERARD KIRCHNER began college in the spring of 1972 and received an A.A. from Wayne Community College in 1974. While attending college, she also worked as a secretary for a large Detroit advertising agency, maintained a home, and raised four children. She has had two marriages, two divorces, and a struggle with drugs and alcoholism. As she writes, women of her generation were pressured to be good housewives, good mothers, and good social hostesses who provided food and drink; ill-equipped for financial independence, they were urged by gynecologists to "solve our problems with tranquilizers." Her own struggles were successful, and in September, 1974, she was accepted into Wayne State University School of Social Work on a full tuition merit scholarship; she plans to go on for a Master's degree. "Hopefully," she writes, "by telling our stories and continuing to learn to live creative and self-sustaining lives our children will be better equipped emotionally and psychologically to determine the direction of their lives."

CHARLOTTE LEVEY returned to college at the Boston campus of the University of Massachusetts in her mid-thirties. The wife of the editor of the Boston Globe Sunday Magazine and mother of two, she is finding herself as student and creative writer.

GAIL LYNCH is now an assistant editor at The American Poetry Review in Philadelphia. She has given readings in "The Woman Poet: II" series at the University of Pennsylvania, at Temple University, and at Franklin and Marshall College. She has also participated in radio programs, and was a winner of the 1971 College Competition in Poetry sponsored by Mademoiselle.

MARTY MOATZ-AUSTIN: "Berkeley, turning 30, being a mother of a five year old, being divorced, being in Susan Griffin's writing classes, being more free in my head than I have ever been in my whole life--all of these things (not necessarily in that order) have pushed me finally to take my writing seriously. Currently, I am in a writing group that has just put out a journal of women's writings called The Wild Iris. We, on the editorial board, hope to continue to print women's writings 'to break the silence.'"

PATTI PATTON graduated from Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles in January, 1975, with a degree in Social Relations and English. Since, she's been living in Phoenix, "working as in bookkeeping as in job, working as in active as a member of the Sexuality Task Force of Phoenix N.O.W., looking forward to moving on but I don't know where yet; trying to evolve a means of being a full-time activist writer and still pay the rent and my student loans. . . . I intend to write forever."

MYRA PETERSON, married for sixteen years and the mother of two teen-agers, now teaches speech, psychology, and Images of Women in Literature at the high school level, and adult courses in Images of Women in the Bible and the biblical approach to women's liberation at a Lutheran church in her neighborhood in Lakewood, California.

CLAIRE CHISLER PHILLIPS is a student in women's studies and political science at SUNY/College at Old Westbury, where she came after working with an antipoverty agency in the Shenandoah Valley. In her autobiography, she writes: "I am tired of the Sylvia Plaths, Marilyn Monroes . . . and poems of outraged passivity in women's publications. They weem to breed impotent rage, not aggressive victories. I am more interested in nurturing a generation of Amazons than lamenting what we women lost at birth."

DEBORAH REICH writes: "I was never able to work up much enthusiasm for college, but in the exciting process of discovering my own humanity I have been, and remain, very interested in women's liberation." Since graduating, she has worked in publishing and as a telephone installer, and is now doing freelance writing, editing, and research.

DEBBY ROSENFELT received her Ph.D. in 1972 from UCLA and is now an Associate Professor of English at California State University, Long Beach, where for the past two years she also coordinated the Center for Women's Studies. She lives in a collective in Santa Monica.

KAREN STERN recently received a B.A. in History and a B.A. in Film Production and Aesthetics from SUNY/Buffalo. She has since been working as a waitress while continuing to pursue her involvement with film-making.

VALERIE STRUBLE was born in Lewistown, Pennsylvania, in 1954, and currently resides, in Erie, Pa. She is working on a degree in writing at the University of Pittsburgh, with a minor in Spanish and psychology.

JANE E. WHEELER, 29, received her B.A. in March, 1975, from UCLA and is now a graduate student in Chinese history there.

JULIE DODD WOOD, writes her teacher Judith Stitzel, is "a student and friend whose writing and presence have influenced me and others. She writes with the knowledge that comes from powerlessness and the power that comes from knowledge."

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN, a graduate student in community mental health, helped organize and codirect the Berkeley Women's Center and to set up a program for troubled young women. She has published poems and essays, and meets weekly with a group of women poets from Susan Griffin's courses "which preserves my sanity."

PUBLICATIONS OF THE FEMINIST PRESS' CLEARINGHOUSE ON WOMEN'S STUDIES

Female Studies VI. Closer to the Ground: Women's Classes, Criticism, Programs—1972. Eds. Nancy Hoffman, Cynthia Secor, Adrian Tinsley for the Commission on the Status of Women in the Modern Language Association. (1972) Essays on women's studies in the classroom, literary criticism from a feminist perspective, course materials.

Female Studies VII. Going Strong: New Courses/New Programs. Ed. Deborah Rosenfelt. (1973) Syllabi for over sixty recent women's studies courses; descriptions of twelve new programs. Introductory essay assessing recent developments in women's studies.

Female Studies IX: Teaching about Women in the Foreign Languages. Ed. Sidonie Cassirer for the Commission on the Status of Women of the Modern Language Association. (Forthcoming 1975) Listings and outlines of courses with a focus on women offered by departments of French, Spanish and German in colleges and universities across the country.

Female Studies X: Student Work—Learning to Speak. Ed. Deborah Silverton Rosenfelt. (Forthcoming 1975) The fruits of some five years of undergraduate women's studies courses on campuses across the country: a first play, a "group autobiography," poems, short stories, papers.

Feminist Resources for Schools and Colleges: A Guide to Curricular Materials. Eds. Carol Ahlum, Jacqueline M. Fralley. (1973) A selective guide to curricular materials at every level from the elementary school to the university—for teachers, students, librarians and parents who want to challenge sexism in education and create nonsexist and feminist curriculum.

High School Feminist Studies. Eds. Carol Ahlum and Jacqueline Fralley. (Forthcoming)
A collection of curricular materials in women's studies for and from the high schools, including essays, bibliography, teaching units.

Nonsexist Curricular Materials for Elementary Schools. Ed. Laurie Olsen Johnson. (1974) A collection of materials for the elementary teacher and student, including quizzes, checklists, bibliographies, workbook, model units.

Strong Women. Ed. Deborah Silverton Rosenfelt. (Forthcoming) Annotated bibliography of widely available paperbacks to help the teacher supplement the male-biased curriculm: fiction, autobiography, drama, poetry.

Women in the High School Curriculum. A Review of U.S. History and English Literature Texts. Phyllis Arlow and Merle Froschl. (1975)

Who's Who and Where in Women's Studies. Eds. Tamar Berkowitz, Jean Mangi, Jane Williamson. (1974) Complete directory of women's studies programs, courses and teachers, arranged by institution, department and instructor.

Women's Studies for Teachers and Administrators: A Packet of Inservice Education Materials. Eds. Merle Froschl, Florence Howe, Sharon Kaylen. (1975)

Women's Studies Newsletter. Quarterly containing articles on new women's studies programs, innovative courses, teaching techniques, curricular materials, book reviews, conference reports, bibliography, job information.

THE FEMINIST PRESS offers alternatives in education and in literature. Founded in 1970, this non-profit, tax-exempt educational and publishing organization works to eliminate sexual stereotypes in books and schools, providing instead a new (or neglected) literature with a broader vision of human potential.

Our books—high-quality, low-cost paperbacks—include reprints of important works by women writers, feminist biographies of women, and nonsexist children's books.

The Clearinghouse on Women's Studies publishes resource guides, curricular materials, bibliographies, directories, and a newsletter, designed to provide information and support for women's studies at every educational level.

The Curriculum and In-Service Projects research sexism in the schools and explore ways to counter the effects of sex-role stereotyping. They develop supplementary materials for high school English and social studies classrooms, and work with teachers on new methods to help students become their best and freest selves.

Through this work we can begin to recreate the forgotten history of women, begin to create a more humane and equitable society for the future.

For a catalogue of all our publications, write to us. We hope that you will.

The Feminist Press
Box 334
Old Westbury, New York 11568

The Clearinghouse on Women's Studies